NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fourth Assembly
First Session

Parliamentary Record

Tuesday 28 February 1984
Wednesday 29 February 1984
Thursday 1 March 1984
Tuesday 6 March 1984
Wednesday 7 March 1984

Part I—Debates
Part II—Questions
Part III—Minutes

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NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fourth Assembly
First Session

Speaker
Roger Michael Steele

Chief Minister and
Minister for Industrial
Development and Tourism
Paul Anthony Edward Everingham

Opposition Leader
Bob Collins

Deputy Chief Minister and
Minister for Health, Youth, Sport,
Recreation and Ethnic Affairs
Nicholas Manuel Dondas

Treasurer and
Minister for Lands
Marshall Bruce Perron

Minister for Mines and Energy and
Minister for Primary Production
Ian Lindsay Tuxworth

Attorney-General and
Minister for Transport and Works
James Murray Robertson

Minister for Education
Tom Harris

Minister for Housing and
Conservation
Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich

Minister for Community Development
Daryl William Manzie

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Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Chairman of Committees — Mr Vale
Deputy Chairman of Committees —
Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Finch
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Leo
Mr McCarthy
Mr Palmer

House Committee
Mr Speaker
Mr Bell
Mr Coulter
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Lanhupuy

Standing Orders Committee
Mr Speaker
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr McCarthy
Mr Robertson

Publications Committee
Mr Bell
Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Palmer

Privileges Committee
Mr B. Collins
Mr Firmin
Mr Hatton
Mr Leo
Mr Manzie

Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee
Mr B. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Finch
Mr Hatton
Mr Smith

Sessional Committee — Environment
Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy

Sessional Committee — New Parliament House
Mr Speaker
Mr Finch
Mr Leo
Mr Perron
Mr Smith
PART I

DEBATES
The Fourth Assembly convened at 10 am on Tuesday 28 February 1984 pursuant to notice by His Honour the Administrator.

The Clerk read the notice summoning the Legislative Assembly into session.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATHS

The Serjeant-at-Arms conducted the Deputy of the Administrator of the Northern Territory, the Honourable Sir William Forster, and his Associate into the Chamber.

The DEPUTY: Members of the Legislative Assembly, His Honour the Administrator, not thinking fit to be present in person at this time, has been pleased to appoint me his deputy to do in his name all that is necessary to be performed in declaring this Assembly open.

The Clerk read the Deputy's Commission.

The DEPUTY: His Honour the Administrator desires me to inform you that, after all members present shall have been sworn, the causes of His Honour calling this Assembly together will be declared by him in person at this place; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall be first chosen, you, members of the Legislative Assembly, will proceed to choose some proper person to be your Speaker; and later this day the person whom you shall so choose will present himself to His Honour at such time and place as His Honour shall appoint.

Honourable members, my Authorisation to administer to members the oaths or affirmations of allegiance and of office as required by law will now be read by the Clerk.

The Clerk read the Authorisation.

RETURNs TO WRITS

The Clerk laid on the Table the returns to the writs for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly held on 3 December 1983.

The following members named in the returns made and subscribed the oaths or affirmations required by law:

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ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Clerk, I remind the Assembly that the time has come when it is necessary for the Assembly to choose one of its members to be Speaker.

I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker the honourable member for Elsey, Mr Steele, and move that the honourable member for Elsey do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr DONDAS (Health): I second the motion.

Mr STEELE (Elsey): I accept nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal?

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Clerk, I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker the honourable member for MacDonnell, Mr Bell, and move that the honourable member for MacDonnell do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr SMITH (Millner): I second the motion.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): I accept nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal? There being no further proposal, the time for proposals has expired. Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions?

Ballot taken.

The CLERK: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Steele, member for Elsey, 19 votes, Mr Bell, member for MacDonnell, 6 votes. I declare the honourable member for Elsey elected as Speaker of the Assembly in accordance with Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the high honour you have conferred upon me.
Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to offer you, on behalf of the parliamentary CLP, our congratulations. I am sure that you will discharge with integrity the high office which you now hold.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to extend to you on behalf of the opposition, rather than the parliamentary Labor Party, the congratulations of the opposition on your election.

Mr Speaker, Erskine May says in respect of the office of Speaker, apart from noting that it is indeed one of the most durable traditions of the parliamentary system: 'Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of the parliament'.

Having gone on to explain the minor departures from this practice in Australia, Pettifer goes on to say: 'Notwithstanding the foregoing, and the fact that the Speakership has long been regarded as a political appointment, Australian Speakers have striven to discharge their duties with impartiality. The degree of impartiality achieved depends on the occupant. But, as a rule, Speakers have been sufficiently detached from government activity to ensure what can be justly claimed to be a high degree of impartiality in the Chair'.

Mr Speaker, indeed the practice of Speakers in Australian parliaments in years past has been largely free of controversy, although not entirely free of controversy; and indeed in the Northern Territory not entirely free of controversy. As I have said in this Assembly before, the role of the Speaker is more than simply to administer the procedures of the parliament. Indeed, the job extends beyond the parliament because the Speaker is the public personification of the parliament. In this case it is the parliament of the Northern Territory. Therefore, your responsibility in that respect is equally onerous.

Mr Speaker, I must say that, in discharging your responsibilities in maintaining both the dignity and authority of this parliament, it is a matter of extreme regret to me that your job has been made doubly difficult by the quite extraordinary statements in the national press by the honourable Chief Minister who relegated this parliament to the status of a kindergarten. Mr Speaker, I would of course have to defer to the honourable Chief Minister in his knowledge of the capacity of his colleagues. But, Mr Speaker, I do feel strongly on this point, and I have mentioned it during previous sessions of the Assembly. The job really is for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by offering you the positive support of this opposition and congratulate you in achieving this high office.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, lest I be accused of a curmudgeonly lack of grace, let me, as the unsuccessful candidate, also rise to offer you my congratulations and to place on record my appreciation of your capacities as a fine parliamentarian. You have distinguished yourself in debate, in question time and in every aspect of the workings of the Assembly. I am aware of the keen understanding that you have of the privileges and rights that adhere in this Assembly. I am quite sure that you will savour the distillation of the hundreds of years of parliamentary practice as the essential spirit of this Assembly. I extend to you, Sir, my heartiest congratulations.

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the many rural people of the Northern Territory that you and I have represented over the years, I would like to extend to you, Sir, their very good wishes. They will receive the news of your appointment and election today with great pleasure and I am sure, Mr Speaker, that there is no doubt in the minds of any of those people
that you will carry out the duties of your office with impartiality and that you will bring to this Assembly the dignity and respect that your predecessors have seen fit to bestow in here by their actions.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I thank you very much for your remarks about the election, a rather landslide election, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition indicated. I do take the office very seriously. I want you to know that, I will be impartial. I will have the interests of all members forever to the fore in my deliberations as your Speaker. This Assembly already has a high reputation in Australia for orderly conduct. I would like to see the members maintaining that high reputation.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am informed that it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend in the lounge of the Assembly and I propose to present myself to him there as the choice of the Assembly as Speaker. I invite honourable members to accompany me to present myself to His Honour the Administrator. The sitting of the Assembly is suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Mr Speaker Steele resumed the Chair.

AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER OATHS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that, accompanied by honourable members, I presented myself to His Honour the Administrator as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker and His Honour was pleased to congratulate me. I inform honourable members that I have received from His Honour the Administrator an authorisation to administer to honourable members the oaths or affirmations of allegiance and of office. I table the Authorisation.

The Clerk read the Authorisation.

ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Administrator intends to attend the Assembly immediately to declare the causes of his calling the Assembly together.

Serjeant-at-Arms, please inform His Honour that the Assembly is ready to receive him.

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair.

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker, honourable members, I have called you together at this time for the dispatch of business and to outline my government's legislative program for the ensuing period. Since the achievement of self-government, the Northern Territory has demonstrated its ability for real growth under the management of a regionally-elected government. Is is my government's renewed intention to continue that progress by enabling people to capitalise on the opportunities that the Northern Territory offers.

Despite the achievements to date, my government believes that there are many opportunities yet to be taken up, which have so far remained dormant because of our lack of population, capital and essential facilities. It is my government's first priority to overcome these barriers to progress by attracting the people, the investment and, where necessary, the attention of the federal government, to overcome disadvantages which reduce our ability to prosper and grow into a full
member of the Australian Commonwealth. In this regard, my government remains committed to establishing the strongest possible working relationship with the federal government, ensuring that the interests of the Territory's people are a constant consideration in national policy making. That is my government's first responsibility to the electorate.

In this Assembly in March last, I was pleased to welcome the announcement that the new federal government would build the railway from Alice Springs to Darwin. It is a matter of great disappointment to my government that this commitment and other undertakings given have been set aside. My government will endeavour to persuade the federal government to renew and honour those commitments. My government will look for a relationship with the federal government under which decisions which affect the Territory are enacted after consultation, and in agreement, with the Territory electorate. The construction of the north-south railway, the establishment of a Territory university, the removal of restrictions that prevent Territory uranium mining ventures from proceeding, the maintenance of coastal shipping services and the settlement of outstanding Aboriginal land claims stand among the most important issues which must be resolved in the interests of the Territory and all Australia. My government will work wholeheartedly with the federal government in bringing these and other Territory issues to a successful outcome. The Territory has much more to contribute to national prosperity and progress if it is given both the means and the freedom to make that contribution.

One of the most serious questions facing Australia today is the provision of employment, particularly for young people. My government will continue to promote the growth of our tourist industry and the manufacturing sector in order both to diversify the Territory's economic base and provide new job opportunities. With the Yulara Tourist Village near completion, with consideration of tourist facilities in the Kakadu National Park under way, with new international standard hotels built or under way in the major centres, the Territory is rapidly improving its tourist facilities and opportunities.

Plans for the relocation and construction of a civil airport terminal in Darwin are welcomed, and my government will use its voice to promote a rapid start to that project.

Tourism is one of the major growth industries in the world today, estimated to be increasing in importance at a rate of about 15% per annum across the world. It is a labour-intensive industry with many hidden benefits for the community — commercial and cultural. My government's commitment to the creation of real, long-term jobs in the private sector can be fulfilled in part by the growth of Territory tourism. The apparent reluctance of the Commonwealth government to come to grips with planning for tourism in Kakadu National Park is a matter of very serious concern to my government.

While the manufacturing sector is undergoing a traumatic period of readjustment nationally, the Territory is in a position to reap the one benefit of our past lack of an established industrial base. The Territory does not face industrial upheaval in order to readjust for the manufacturing needs of the 1980s and beyond. New Territory enterprises can and will be encouraged to adopt the latest technological advances.

My government will also seek to attract manufacturers of new-technology products to the Territory. Our aim is to secure for Territorians the best long-term employment advantages for the future.

A fair measure of the Territory's success in the future will be the degree to which we are able to cement a growing link of trade and mutual interest with
the countries of our region. My government believes that this is, firstly, a responsibility of national government, but that the Territory is uniquely positioned to assist in that effort. Accordingly, we will promote the concept of a Territory university, able to offer studies to north Australian, South-east Asian and west Pacific region students.

North Australia is the only major area of the world with a tropical climate within what is known as the 'developed' world. North Australia can provide a senior educational institution within an environment similar to many regions of the world where over-population, under-employment and food production yields are some of the most pressing problems. Australia has the resources to provide and maintain such an institution and its presence in the Territory would provide a major intellectual and economic stimulus to local progress. There is scope too in the Territory for private educationalists to take advantage of the undoubted demand in the South-east Asian region for Australian secondary education.

I have spoken of the broad, long-term aims of my government. There are many matters of more particular concern which will occupy my government during its term of office.

Taking into account the undoubted high costs of both living and investing in the Territory, my government remains committed to minimising the taxes imposed on people and business activity. Wherever possible, Territory taxes will be held down, offsetting some of the cost disadvantages borne by the community, and helping to attract new investment and individuals. My government takes note of the recent encouragement by the federal Treasurer to the states to hold down taxes. At the same time, there is an increasing need to ensure a fair spread of financial responsibilities across the community. My government believes that a fair contribution is a necessary part of the growing-up process that the Territory and its communities are presently undergoing.

In the long term, my government will move towards full commercial operation of public transport and water and sewerage services and will continue to examine the problems associated with Aboriginal communities, particularly those situated on Aboriginal land, contributing to the cost of water, sewerage and electricity charges.

On receipt of the report from the greater Darwin Rural Advisory Council, my government will consider the progressive introduction of a form of local representation with a concurrent local contribution towards the provision of services in this and other similar areas.

My government will continue to work closely with the business community in all matters related to training, investment opportunity and regulatory legislation. The Territory Development Corporation Act will be amended to include a representative of the small business community on the board, and small business services are being expanded to include a shopfront advisory centre. The Territory Development Corporation will continue its important work of identifying business opportunity and of encouraging local entrepreneurs or interstate and overseas investors to take up those opportunities.

My government will pursue prospects for the commercial development of large gas reserves in central Australia and the further exploration of the Territory's mineral-rich areas.

After nearly 6 years of self-government, it is time to review the Public Service Act and ensure that it is tailored to meet the emerging needs of a modern Territory service. In particular, it is appropriate to look at those areas concerned with conflict of interest, equal employment opportunity, discipline
and Aboriginal development. The Public Service Commissioner's office will be responsible for drawing up a public service code of ethics which will be complementary to the act. Equal employment opportunity, although specifically addressed in the present act, is a concern of my government. The encouragement of applications by suitably-qualified women for senior positions within the public service, and the appointment of women to boards, councils, tribunals and trusts within government and semi-government authorities, will receive particular attention.

A study of the present and future impact of technology on the service and the related issue of information dissemination in view of the ever-growing volume of records compiled by such technology is clearly necessary.

Other matters under consideration include the formation of a senior executive service and the revision of conditions applying to new recruits. Wherever possible, the emphasis will be on local recruitment to the service, and my government will be looking for ways both to reduce the hidden costs of interstate recruitment and to ensure a longer-term commitment from those brought to the Territory from other parts of Australia.

Permanent part-time employment will now be introduced to the Northern Territory Public Service. It is the intention of my government in all matters concerning the public service to promote a true Territory-based service providing excellent career opportunities and the highest level of effectiveness.

In education, a number of new initiatives will increase the need for cooperation and joint planning between authorities in the vocational training and post-school areas. My government will meet its commitment to expand post secondary education with particular emphasis on vocational preparation of youth, better school staffing levels and the provision for post-graduate scholarships. My government will strive to achieve its objective for self-sufficiency in teacher education through the Darwin Community College and Batchelor College.

Proposals for improvements in secondary correspondence education available via satellite technology, TAFE centres in smaller towns, cooperation with Primary Production on short training programs in rural skills, and teacher and student exchanges with our Asian neighbours will be followed through. Alternative schooling for disinterested or behaviourally-disturbed students and secondary student accommodation in Darwin are other matters under consideration.

To meet the demands and aspirations of communities for more skilled and qualified local members of their community, a range of strategies for improving the academic and secondary education will be introduced. Liaison with the Commonwealth on the question of provision of permanent and transportable out-station schools will be necessary because the Commonwealth funds such schools. In anticipation of the establishment of the Tindal air force base, my government will enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth on the development and funding of new primary and high schools at Katherine.

A Northern Territory board of studies is being established to accredit senior secondary school courses and issue certificates for both junior and secondary school courses. The new board will closely monitor changes taking place in the South Australian system to which the Northern Territory is currently linked.

In health, my government is proceeding with plans for a children's hospital at Casuarina, a sports medicine institute, retirement villages in Darwin and Alice Springs, a new hospital wing at Katherine and, provided federal government support is forthcoming, a nursing home in the same town.
The Territory's future can be assured only with the full commitment of its people, and my government will act to encourage home ownership in the community. We will maintain current levels of assistance to people wishing to buy their own homes. The home loans assistance available to date has helped increase Territory home ownership by some 30% since self-government. This year, the present public service waiting list will be exhausted, allowing my government to introduce a single set of policies over housing matters. To prepare for this, a major review of housing policies will be carried out. The Planning Act will be streamlined to make it easier for applications to be processed speedily and efficiently. My government is also reviewing covenant requirements over all leases and is preparing to act against those who have failed to comply with their undertakings.

It is my government's intention to provide a recreation lake for the people of Alice Springs.

Among legislative initiatives to be brought before this Assembly for consideration will be those resulting from the current review of the Evidence Act and the inquiry into workers' compensation. The results of the Territory freight costs inquiry will be put before this Assembly for consideration, and my government will act upon the conclusions in the Territory's best interests. A submission to the federal government on the desirability of a free trade zone for Australia's most northerly port is under final preparation and should be ready by mid-year.

My government will use its term of office to advance the Territory economically, socially and constitutionally, using all opportunities to encourage new population and new investment, maintaining the view that real and sustainable growth and thus greater opportunity is created only through the growth of the private sector.

Mr Speaker, honourable members, I will now leave you to your important deliberations.

His Honour the Administrator was led from the Chamber by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement relating to the ministry office holders and the administrative arrangements of government.

On 13 December 1983, His Honour the Administrator made the following appointments of ministers of the Territory: Nicholas Manuel Dondas, Minister for Health, Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs; Marshall Bruce Perron, Treasurer and Minister for Lands; Ian Lindsay Tuxworth, Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Primary Production; James Murray Robertson, Attorney-General and Minister for Transport and Works; Tom Harris, Minister for Education; Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich, Minister for Housing and Conservation; Daryl William Manzie, Minister for Community Development; and Paul Anthony Edward Everingham, Chief Minister and Minister for Industrial Development and Tourism. On the same day, His Honour made an administrative arrangements order allotting to those ministers the administration of departments and the provisions of acts and the responsibility for areas of government specified in that order.

The honourable member for Araluen has been appointed Leader of the House and the honourable member for Sadadeen is government whip.
OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the following members of the opposition hold offices as follows: Bob Collins, Leader of the Opposition, responsible for education and electoral matters, primary industry and the public service; Terence Edward Smith, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, responsible for treasury, industry and commerce, employment, industrial relations, youth, sport and recreation, and housing; Daniel Murray Leo, opposition whip, responsible for mines and energy, lotteries and gaming, public works and utilities, police and fire services, and prison officers; Neil Randal Bell, responsible for women's affairs, transport and works, lands, consumer affairs, functions of Attorney-General and special responsibility for central Australia; Brian Richard Ede, responsible for health, community development and local government; and Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy, responsible for Aboriginal affairs, tourism, conservation and the environment.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 12)

Bill presented by leave and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr Speaker: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Honour the Administrator a copy of his speech.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the following Address in Reply be agreed to: To His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, may it please Your Honour, we, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, in Assembly assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Honour for the speech which you have been pleased to address to the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I second the motion and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the resumption of the debate be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr Speaker: Honourable members, it is now necessary for the Assembly to appoint a member to be its Chairman of Committees.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for
its Chairman of Committees the honourable member for Braitling, Mr Vale, and move that the honourable member for Braitling be appointed Chairman of Committees in this Assembly.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there any further motion?

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees the member for Nhulunbuy, Mr Leo, and move that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy be appointed Chairman of Committees in this Assembly.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there any further motion? There being no further motion, the time for motions has expired.

Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions?

Ballot taken.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Vale, member for Braitling, 19 votes, Mr Leo, member for Nhulunbuy, 6 votes. I declare the honourable member for Braitling, Mr Vale, appointed as Chairman of Committees in accordance with Standing Orders and offer him my congratulations.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Honourable members, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the high honour you have conferred upon me.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Braitling on his election as Chairman of Committees. I once held the position myself and I certainly know that it is not an easy task. In fact, honourable members would remember one occasion when, as Chairman of Committees early in the piece, I became muddled up in the Chair and one of the attendants of the Assembly, Mr Lew Fatt, walked by and said: 'Can we help you?'

Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees is a very difficult position to hold within this Assembly. It was once referred to by the honourable Attorney-General as akin to walking through a minefield. I would like to advise the honourable member for Braitling that we will provide to him whatever assistance we can in his new position of Chairman of Committees.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to the honourable member for Braitling for achieving the position of Chairman of Committees. The honourable Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory has fairly accurately described the task of Chairman of Committees as a very difficult one. However, in the past, when acting in that role in the absence of the then Chairman, the honourable member did a fine job in the Chair. He would certainly have my support and whatever assistance that I can provide to him.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their kind words and I will do all within my power to discharge my duties properly.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Former Member - E.J. Connellan AO, CBE

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I refer to the death on 26 December 1983 of Edward John Connellan AO, CBE and move that this Assembly
express its regret at the death on 26 December 1983 of Edward John Connellan, a nominated non-official member of the Legislative Council for the Northern Territory between 3 December 1965 and 23 November 1967, place on record its appreciation of his meritorious service to the Assembly and the people of the Northern Territory, and tender its profound sympathy to his widow and family.

E.J. Connellan died, after a long illness, at his property, Narwietooma, on 26 December 1983 and was accorded a state funeral. The eulogy was read by the Hon Doug Anthony who was a personal friend for many years. 'EJ' was born on 24 June 1912 at Donald, Victoria, the son of T.P. Connellan, grazier of Narwie Station near Balranald, NSW. He was educated at Xavier College, Melbourne and Melbourne University. He spent some time jackarooing on his parents' property and then 3 years teaching mathematics and science at Swan Hill High School.

He early developed a passion for flying and a deep interest in the Northern Territory which was kindled by J.V. Fairbairn who later became Australia's first Minister for Air in the federal parliament. 'EJ' purchased his first aeroplane, a Spartan, in 1936 when he was 24. In 1938, he undertook his own, privately-financed, 3-month aerial survey of the Territory's stock and aviation potential. From Essendon to Essendon, he covered 40,000 miles in an open plane without adequate landing strips and with no engineering back-up. It was during this trip that he first met John McEwen, then Minister for the Interior, who was to become a life-long friend and mentor. McEwen suggested that he run an airmail service to a group of Territory stations.

Connellan Airways commenced operations on 10 July 1939 when Connellan himself piloted a single-engine Percival Gull monoplane on an inaugural run to Wyndham and back. The 'fleet' comprised 2 Percival Gulls and the initial service was from Alice Springs, Mount Doreen, the Granites, Tanami, Inverway, VRD, Wyndham and return, on a fortnightly basis. The service attracted a subsidy of £1500 per annum plus £1000 per annum from the flying doctor service for a 3-year period. Few of his ports of call had airstrips and 'EJ' made most of them himself with a now-famous 1920 Silver Ghost Rolls Royce. The first ground staff at Alice Springs included Sam Calder and, in December 1939, Damian Miller joined the company.

Eddie Connellan married Evelyn Mary Bell in Alice Springs on 29 August 1940 and Mrs Connellan then spent her honeymoon running the Alice Springs end of the operation while her new husband flew all over northern Australia.

After the war, with George Taylor as chief pilot, the airline expanded rapidly with the introduction of Dragonflies and Rapides. Later, Connair, as the airline had by then become, began to service main towns and large Aboriginal settlements in the Territory, Western Australia and Queensland as more economical aircraft such as Herons and the immortal DC3s were added to the fleet.

'EJ' was dedicated to the safe operation of his airline and his record is admirable: only 2 crashes of which one, near Cairns, was due to pilot error.

Eddie Connellan's battle with the bureaucracy are legend. The 1950s and 1960s saw him constantly travelling to Canberra to lobby heads of government and public servants for a continuation of the large subsidies which were vital to support an airline which served such a small population over a vast area. Although he never developed any sort of rapport with bureaucrats, he was invariably on most friendly terms with the leaders of government with the exception of Prime Minister Whitlam. He was a close friend of Robert Menzies. He also had friends in the mainstream of commercial aviation. He had been at
Xavier College with John Ryland, for many years General Manager of TAA, and had known Reg Ansett since childhood.

For services to aviation, Edward John Connellan was awarded the Coronation Medal in 1953, the OBE in 1958, the Oswald Watt Memorial Medal for Aviation in 1964, the CBE in 1976 and the Order of Australia in 1981.

He was a nominated member of the Legislative Council from 1965 to 1968 and founder of the Northern Territory Development League in 1947. In March 1983, he launched the Connellan Airways Trust to subsidise air services to fill the gap left by the closing of airline operations to the remote areas of the Territory and the Kimberleys.

He was an intensely private person, much respected and admired, who provided a service to Territorians that has never been matched, despite the advances in modern technology. He was a true Territory pioneer not only in aviation but also in the pastoral industry. It is said that profits from Narwietooama on many occasions sustained the airline. A towering figure, if not in stature certainly in strength of personality and vision, his death is a sad loss to the people of the Northern Territory.

Eddie Connellan had 3 children. His daughter, Cynthia, died as an infant and his elder son, Roger, was tragically killed on 5 January 1977 when a deranged pilot flew into the Connair hangar at Alice Springs Airport. His younger son, Christopher, now manages the family property, Narwietooama, 160 miles from Alice Springs.

To his widow, son and other members of the Connellan family, this Assembly extends its deepest sympathy.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the opposition wishes to join the government this afternoon in offering its condolences to the family of the late, and indeed great, Territory aviation pioneer, Eddie Connellan. As all Territorians would know, Eddie Connellan was responsible for pioneering a bush airline to service vast areas of the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia so that the few thousand people who lived in those areas would have access to medical, educational and ordinary facilities which would have been denied them otherwise.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned at the time that, perhaps more than any member of at least the former Assembly, I appreciated the significance of the contribution which Connair made to the Territory. At the time, I was the only member of the Assembly who was a regular passenger on Connair aircraft. In fact, I flew on Connair aircraft for something like 13 years. It was pretty hard for me to think about the Northern Territory without thinking about Connair because it became synonymous with the Northern Territory. In all that time, I do not think that Territorians have been serviced by a more personalised and obliging airline. Certainly, it had a tremendous reputation among bush people in the Northern Territory, largely because of the efforts of its founder and manager, Eddie Connellan.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has gone over historical ground as far as Eddie Connellan is concerned, and there is no need for me to repeat that. I want to say that, in establishing and developing Connair, Eddie Connellan made a major contribution to helping alleviate the tyranny of distance from which many people in isolated areas of the Northern Territory suffer. It is fitting that Mr Connellan's significant contribution to the development of the Territory has now been recognised in several ways, in particular by the naming of an airstrip at the Yulara Tourist Village in central Australia.
Mr Speaker, the opposition joins the government in offering condolences to the family of Eddie Connellan and in paying tribute to the very great pioneering work he carried out for the benefit of all Territorians.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister. E.J. Connellan, known to many people as 'EJ' and to his close friends as Eddie, was born in Donald, Victoria on 24 June 1912 and died at his property, Narwietooma, in central Australia on 26 December 1983. In a farewell speech to his staff in Alice Springs on 21 January 1980, after Connair had been sold to East West, Mr Connellan said in part: 'In 1945, we made the discovery that subsidy is the worst form of cancer'. It is somewhat ironical that cancer killed this tough pioneer pastoralist and aviator who was feared by some, not liked by others but respected by all who knew him. E.J. Connellan, who became a legend in his own lifetime and did so much as an aviator to bridge the tyranny of distance in northern Australia, did so not by design but by accident. He originally arrived in the Northern Territory in 1938 to seek out pastoral land in central Australia, not for cattle as commonly believed but, according to Mr Connellan himself in a 1939 edition of Walkabout, for sheep.

As well as securing land for himself during this 40 000 mile survey trip in 1938, Connellan was to report back to the then Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, and others on the Territory's potential for pastoral development. It was during this survey trip that 'EJ' met up with McEwen who was visiting the Territory. The minister asked Connellan to start an aerial mail run in the Territory. 'EJ' agreed on the condition that the run be taken out of his hands after 3 years so that he could concentrate on his first love, raising cattle. Connellan borrowed money and purchased 2 Percival Gull aircraft. In July 1939, when Edward John Connellan piloted one of these planes out of Alice Springs on a 2000-mile run to Wyndham and back, he unofficially launched the Territory's first and only airline, Connellan Airways.

Connellan was a man of vision. He saw a developing Northern Territory, indeed northern Australia, peopled by men and women who would not and should not have been unduly penalised by isolation in the vast distances of the outback. Educated at Xavier College and later at Melbourne University, he then worked on his father's property in NSW before becoming a teacher of mathematics at Swan Hill School. In his spare time, he studied aviation and radio communications and dreamed of the distant Northern Territory and its untapped potential.

Mr Speaker, history records that the first official Connellan Airways flight was on 8 August 1939 and that, by the end of that month, Connellan had flown 3 mail runs to Wyndham and 3 medical missions. The biggest little airline in the world was off and running. Within 2 months, war was declared and his flight crew, comprising his brother Vin, Ted and Jeff O'Keefe, who were killed in the war, John Kellow, Damien Miller and Sam Calder were called up for service. Connellan was ordered to keep the mail and medical services operating. By this time, he had a ground crew building, hangars and accommodation at the town site aerodrome in Alice Springs and the famed Silver Ghost Rolls was ranging north and west to the Western Australian border, levelling out landing and emergency strips.

In August 1940, 'EJ' married Evelyn Bell who spent her honeymoon running the Alice end of the airline whilst 'EJ' flew hundreds of thousands of miles over northern Australia.

During the war, Eddie Connellan supplied army observer units around the north-west coast, surveyed aerodrome sites for the RAAF and developed an aerial photographic technique which the army adopted and planned to use in the mapping
of the north-west if the Japanese invaded. With the return of the survivors of his crew from the war years, 'EJ' was able to expand his fleet by another 2 aircraft, a Dragon and a Dragonfly.

Eddie Connellan's main aim in coming to the Territory was to choose a pastoral property for himself and, as a result of the pastoral survey he made in 1938, he chose 1000 square miles of good grazing land 100 miles west of the Alice and christened it Narwietooma. Narwietooma was successful and it is alleged that 'EJ' subsidised the airline from time to time out of profits from the property.

His main problem area was to find a plane to meet the requirements of a long distance mail run, with above century heat, coping with the rough bush strips and the long distances between airstrips. Because of this, he drew up specifications for the ideal aircraft for his mail run. He called it the 'Brolga' after the Connellan Airways code name used by the military during the war. He had plans published in the magazine 'Aircraft' in April 1946. This design was recommended to the aeronautics division of CSIRO and 'EJ' tried to interest manufacturers in it. The Brolga was never built. However, the winner of an England to Australia air race, the Britten Norman Islander, closely resembled his specifications. Next he began convincing DCA officials to remodel certain regulations to suit the conditions and the job he was doing, and he rebuilt the undercarriage of the Gull so it could carry heavier loads and handle the rough bush strips. He then demonstrated to DCA that the heavier payloads could be carried in the remodelled Gull whilst still maintaining the safety margin.

However, being an expert pilot and an aviation engineer were not enough for the Territory's pioneer mailman. He had to dabble in public relations to convince isolated and independent-minded Territorians that they needed an air service.

Eddie Connellan and his wife, Evelyn, had 3 children: a daughter, Cynthia, who died as an infant, Roger, who was killed, and Christopher Connellan, who now runs the property, Narwietooma. He was awarded the Coronation Medal in 1953 for his services to aviation, the OBE in 1956, then the Oswald Watt Memorial Medal for Aviation in 1964 and the CBE in 1976. He was a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Council from 1965 to 1967, the founder and President of the Northern Territory Development League in 1947 and President of the Centralian Pastoralists Association from 1950 to 1952. He has also written and had published a number of papers on drought management and pastoral protection in central Australia, for which he experimented on his station, Narwietooma.

Mr Speaker, the airline and its founder have gone but the mark that Edward John Connellan has left on the Northern Territory will remain forever.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise to endorse the motion of condolence moved by the Chief Minister. I do so because Narwietooma is within my electorate and Edward John Connellan was a constituent of mine. It would be quite a surprise if 'EJ' had in fact voted for the sitting member in either of the last 2 elections and I trust neither he nor his family will take it as ill that I take this opportunity to accord my respect to the man and to his achievements. In the course of my duties as member for MacDonnell, I received representations from Mr Connellan on behalf of the large number of Aboriginal people who live in the area.

The matter of excisions for Aboriginal people living on pastoral leases, at times, has been one of hot debate within this Assembly. It has also been of some concern to and, dare I say, bloodmindedness on the part of, some lessees.
However, I think it is to his eternal credit and an indication of his attitude that E.J. Connellan was one of the first pastoral lessees to negotiate such an excision. A large number of people now live at the community at Mbungara which is an excision from the Narwietooma head lease.

Another surprising connection that E.J. Connellan had with the Northern Territory was pointed out to me when another person of national stature who has left his mark on northern Australia visited the Centre. I refer to the writer Xavier Herbert. Mr Speaker, Xavier Herbert is a pathfinding author in Australia. He is a pathfinder in terms of describing human relations in northern Australia and in describing the history of social, economic and, dare I say, human development in northern Australia. It therefore came as a matter of some interest and surprise to me to find that the paths of these 2 great Australians, Xavier Herbert and Edward John Connellan, had crossed in the twenties and thirties in the Territory. I would look forward very much to seeing more written of the views and the work of both these men and the relationship between them.

I had the good fortune to hear E.J. Connellan speak publicly on a number of occasions and I think it is worth putting on record that he was a consummate public speaker. I heard him speak when he launched the Connellan Airways Trust to meet the educational needs of isolated children. At that time, he could not have been a well man, nor could he have been a well man when I heard him speak at a speech night at a local high school several months before. However, on both those occasions, he spoke brilliantly and entertainingly, and was a joy to listen to. I think that is worth recording, Mr Speaker.

Mention has been made of the fact that E.J. Connellan was a schoolteacher. I read a paper that he had prepared for an isolated children's parents' association meeting some 2 years ago. In that, he described some of his own experiences as a teacher. I heard him speak publicly about them at the speech night to which I referred. On the basis of those comments, and the manner of the man himself, it was clear to me that the children whom he taught must have had a very good teacher indeed.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned before that E.J. Connellan negotiated the excision of Mbungara for Aboriginal people who had traditional connections in the area of the Narwietooma lease. I think that I would be doing less than justice to Edward John Connellan if I did not mention in this Assembly the respect in which he is held generally and by the Aboriginal people as well. Mr Speaker, those are the terms in which I wish to endorse this motion of condolence before the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask honourable members to signify their assent to the motion by standing in silence.

Members stood in silence.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly, notwithstanding any previous resolution of the Assembly, Mr Speaker may, at his discretion, appoint a time for holding a sitting of the Assembly, which time shall be notified to each member in writing.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, for the purposes of section 24 of the Legislative Assembly Powers and Privileges Act, authorise the broadcasting of proceedings during the present
session of the Assembly on such occasions and under such conditions as Mr Speaker may determine.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, if the time between the termination of one sitting day and the commencement of the next sitting day is 2 months or more on any occasion during this session of the Assembly, all members of the Assembly shall be deemed to have been granted leave of absence for such interval between the sitting days.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 15, Mr Speaker, Mr McCarthy, Mr Robertson, Mr B. Collins and Mr Ede be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 16, Mr Firmin, Mr Hatton, Mr Manzie, Mr B. Collins and Mr Leo be appointed as the Committee of Privileges and that the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly, and to adjourn from place to place.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 17, Mr Speaker, Mr Coulter, Mr Hanrahan, Mr Bell and Mr Lanhupuy be appointed as the House Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 18, Mr D.W. Collins, Mr Dale, Mr Palmer, Mr Bell, and Mr Lanhupuy be appointed as the Publications Committee, the committee have power to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly, the committee have power to move from place to place and the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 19, Mr Coulter, Mr Finch, Mr Hatton, Mr B. Collins and Mr Smith be appointed as a Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers, and that the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move a motion for the appointment of a Sessional Committee on the Environment. I move that: 1. during the present session of the Assembly a committee to be known as the
Sessional Committee on the Environment, comprising Mr D.W. Collins, Mr Coulter, Mr Dale, Mr Ede and Mr Lanhupuy be appointed; 2. the committee be empowered to inquire into and, from time to time, report upon and make recommendations on all matters relating to uranium mining and processing activities and their effects on the environment within the Alligator Rivers region; 3. the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private session notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit, and to publish information pertaining to the committee's activities from time to time; 4. the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public; 5. in considering the matters referred to it, the committee have power to consider the minutes of evidence and records of similar committees established in previous sessions of the Assembly; and 6. the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Orders.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move a further motion in relation to a sessional committee. I move that: 1. during the present session of the Assembly, a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee, comprising Mr Speaker, Mr Perron, Mr Finch, Mr Leo and Mr Smith be appointed; 2. the committee be directed to prepare a brief upon which architectural drawings can be prepared for a new parliament house on the present site of the Legislative Assembly and adjacent roads and Crown land; 3. the committee arrange for the conducting of a competition to attract architectural proposals for a new parliament house and publicly exhibit entries received; 4. the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time; 5. the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private sessions notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place and to have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit; 6. the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public; 7. in considering the matters referred to it, the committee have power to consider the minutes of evidence and records of similar committees established in previous sessions of the Assembly; and 8. the foregoing provisions of this resolution, in so far as they are inconsistent with Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Orders.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from page 9.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I present an Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the following terms: May it please Your Honour, we, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, in Assembly assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Honour for the speech which you have been pleased to address to this Assembly.

At the commencement of this Fourth Assembly, it is appropriate to review one of the most important aspects of government. Federal-Territory relations could only be described as poor to bad, despite a proclaimed desire for
consensus by the federal government. Regrettably, consensus seems to consist of agreement with federal view or else, despite a record of total lack of consultation with the Northern Territory government unless forced. Despite this, I must congratulate the federal government on moves to deregulate the financial system, restructure and retrain Australia's ailing manufacturing industry and to consider reductions in protectionism - gradually, but a timetable needs to be established.

However, the federal government has failed to deliver on many of its promises. For instance, with petrol, it has increased rather than lowered the price. In the case of the Territory, even more than Queensland, it seems determined to frustrate the efforts of Territorians to evolve a viable, local socio-economic unit.

The worst of its designs appears to be a move through the state-Territory relativities study to cut into the Territory's funding arrangements under the Memorandum of Understanding. We would not argue that the memorandum is immutable but it does specifically provide that any change must be by agreement - not unilaterally. Of course, in its decision to proceed with the review of a 6-state and Territory basis, the federal government overruled not only the Territory but all the states. So much for consensus.

There is a lesson in all this for the ACT, which is currently considering self-government, and that lesson is to go one step further than the Territory. We thought we were safe with a solemnly-concluded written agreement, signed by the Prime Minister of the day, but it appears all this counts for little when the chips are down. My advice then to the ACT Legislative Assembly is not to settle for anything less than legislation to cover its financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. Even then it will not be 100% safe.

The pity of it all is that, regrettably, this federal government has little appreciation of the potential that stands to be realised by the expenditure of reasonable funds on infrastructure in the Northern Territory. Everywhere else the infrastructure that we lack is taken for granted. If Territory funding is cut back before our economic and social development gathers reasonable impetus, then once again we stand the chance of drifting along at the mercy of the current as we did for so many years of direct Commonwealth administration.

Whilst our financial arrangements are modelled on those of the states, there are important differences. We are, after all, a territory, not a state, and as such a special responsibility of the Commonwealth which has many years of doing nothing to catch up on. As our economic and social base grows, our political evolution towards statehood must follow. But until the Territory is allowed the full prerequisites of statehood, it should not be lumped in with them. It is, and remains, a special case to be developed towards statehood.

For much the same reasons, the insensitive decisions to allow uranium mining at Roxby Downs, while forbidding new mines in the Territory, and the dishonouring of the railway promise have aroused the ire of Territorians who see our prospects of viability threatened. It is interesting that further evidence is mounting of the special consideration that the Territory should be afforded as a result of the operation here of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. While the act has much to recommend it in terms of economic potential for the Aboriginal community, there is no doubt that it inhibits the economic development of the community at large.

The ability to veto development of any sort on Aboriginal land, and what the Aboriginal Land Inquiry Commissioner, Paul Seaman, of Western Australia describes as 'double dipping' in terms of royalties, merits special consideration
for the Territory. The commissioner is quoted as stating: 'My present impression is that, if legislation here follows the Northern Territory model, there would be an inhibition of exploration activity and possibly some adverse effect upon the Western Australian economy'. Developments in WA are interesting and will be followed with keen interest here. Obviously, the government of Western Australia, so heavily dependent on revenues from mining to maintain state services, will have a different perspective of federal government which can look to the whole Australian tax base for its revenue.

I will only stray outside my portfolios in one area: education. Let us face it, though, education is a major industry and so I do have some responsibility, however indirectly. We must use our geographical position to enhance educational opportunities for Territorians. I am hopeful that we are now in a positive track with the Tertiary Education Commission towards the establishment of a university facility in the Territory. Even so, it is probably still some years off. I am sure the minister will report as the situation develops in the months immediately ahead of us.

However, whatever form it takes, it will grow faster and offer a better and wider range of courses to Territorians if its enrolments can be augmented by streams of other qualified Australians and South-east Asians who cannot be found places in existing universities. The social and economic benefits to the Territory of a more diverse university facility are obvious. Indeed, in the field of secondary education, benefits can possibly be gained without detriment to present requirements and with no call on our resources. Many Asians are looking unsuccessfully to Australia at the moment for an education for their children. I think it may be possible to get overseas funding for the provision of private secondary boarding school facilities in the Territory when a favourable decision on the university becomes known. Obviously, a more than fair share of places in any such school would have to be available for young Territorians. This only makes sense because otherwise the overseas students would not be getting a real Australian education.

These thoughts are not an expression of government policy but at this stage simply indicate a readiness to think flexibly in developing our economic base. Education is an area of considerable potential for economic growth in this country and I do not see why we should not aspire to getting a share which will enhance the opportunities available for our own kids.

I will say a few words on the subject of training as it relates to the tourist industry. I will be talking about the tourist industry shortly and it obviously holds out the greatest hope for the Territory and, for that matter, Australia, for speedy job creation. It is a labour-intensive industry and for that reason I have always been anxious to promote it.

The ambitious plans that the Territory has for tourism will necessitate considerable training of the workforce, especially as in the tourist industry, perhaps more than any other and in the Territory more than anywhere else - perhaps more than north Queensland and Western Australia - the workforce is very mobile. I am concerned that, although many people and groups are not seeking to stick their fingers into the tourism pie from any and every angle, the matter of training which, a couple of years ago, I thought the Northern Territory was approaching in a reasonably coherent way as regards the tourist industry, now seems to be a matter of pushing and pulling between various seemingly rival groups which should be working closely in harmony. I have asked the Minister for Education to resolve the matter within the next few months and I hope that bureaucracy, academia and the industry can come to terms because, if they cannot, I consider the matter sufficiently important to simply make the decisions for them.
Turning my attention now to an entirely domestic matter, the government sees it as being timely to review the operations of the Public Service Act. The act has stood substantially unaltered since its passage before self-government. One of the major concerns with the act is that everything seems to take so long - rather like the Planning Act. Appeals against appointments and such like need to be expedited. There is too much humbug still talkedke of in regard to the Public Service. It is no longer, as it was in the 19th century, a small coterie drawn in from the ranks of the establishment and living by certain traditions. In Australia, it is very largely a pacesetting employer whose employees are responsible for the efficient expenditure of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. At a time when the world is marching into the era of 'hi-tech', we must bend and blend to adapt to this.

The federal government obviously sees a requirement for a more flexible service and has introduced extensive changes recognising the need for greater freedom to hire and fire at the senior executive level. A thorough-going review of the act is proceeding in the Public Service Commissioner's Office and is yet to come to government for consideration but I do not see any threat to existing fundamental conditions. The review, I should make it clear, is not even considering subjects such as leave entitlements or air fares. It is concerned only with streamlining the act itself.

To give some idea of my thinking, though, I should say that, whilst I do think permanency inhibits the efficiency of the public service, it is there, and below the level of, say, E4, I do not see much point in changing it. A solidly permanent senior executive division, however, may well be sufficiently less effective and warrant consideration of more attractive incentives than permanency. The federal government obviously thinks so and seems to be of the view that senior executives should relate much more directly to the government of the day. All in all, the federal government moves could see much greater mobility amongst upper echelons in the public service and could lead indirectly to greater movement of executives between public service and private enterprise with corresponding advantages. The proposed changes will be discussed with staff representatives when they have been sufficiently developed.

We are, I think, close to consummation of special superannuation arrangements for police and NTEC employees and I hope they can be in operation by 1 July 1984. The government has no intention now of proceeding with a Territory public service superannuation scheme. It is unfortunate in some ways, especially as I think the unions knocked back a very good deal for their members. But rather than haggle any more, we will continue with the Commonwealth scheme and await with interest any moves towards a national superannuation scheme. I might say that, in my appreciation of the future of superannuation, the proposed NT scheme may well rank as the high-water mark in terms of benefits for contributors.

Police and emergency services continue to carry out their tasks effectively. In the Fire Service, agreement has been reached with the Victorian government for the secondment of a senior fire officer to act as Chief Fire Officer here for 2 years. I would like to express my appreciation to the Victorian government.

In the field of women's affairs, the Women's Advisory Council is up and running and the Women's Affairs Unit is beginning to function. The position of Assistant Commissioner for Equal Employment Opportunities in the Public Service Commissioner's office is proving difficult to fill.

Turning to industrial development and tourism, let me say that, except for maximising local growth and participation through and in new mining ventures, I see the role of the Department of Mines and Energy as exclusive in promoting
more mining and exploration activity in the Territory.

In the field of tourist promotion in Australia and overseas, the role of the Tourist Commission is paramount. In the area of tourism development, the Tourist Commission has a policy and executive role which, to some extent, it must share with the Territory Development Corporation which is engaged in assisting the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure - and it needs to be rapid. In Alice Springs alone, after the completion of the new Sheraton, we will still be 1000 rooms short of the targeted projection in the 1969 Harris Kerr Forster Report. That is not to say that the intervening years have proven the HKF report to be all that it was cracked up to be in 1969. But, of course, tourism promotion effectively languished on a pitiful budget until 1978, so we have that catching up to do as well.

Good and all as tourism promotion efforts have been since then, we have no cause for complacency. In 1978, the Territory took the rest of this country by storm tourism-wise, with massive and professional promotions. And we have continued to do so, but the other states now have their acts together and are fighting back - especially our main domestic competitor, Queensland. Greater effort will be needed, not only by government but also by the industry, not only to maintain but to increase our share of the market. Especially in the Top End, operators must become more reliable, more attuned to the market and more aggressive in doing something themselves to market their product.

Reliability is a key factor. Last minute cancellation of tours, especially in the Wet, because only a few seats have been sold, cannot be tolerated. This gives the whole industry a bad name. Alternative tours when certain creek crossings are flooded must be laid on rather than a total cancellation. It is time for a much more professional approach to be adopted in some sectors of the industry if we are to succeed in making tourism the Territory's major industry.

Hampered as we are by federal control of our 2 major national parks and a complete absence of any substantial infrastructure in Kakadu even after all these years of talk about its scenic wonders by successive governments, the task of attracting the masses of overseas visitors we would like will not be an easy one if operators do not gain a high reputation for their product and their dependability. Industry consultants point out that the market orientation of many operators, not just here but elsewhere in Australia, is all wrong. They are offering the visitor what the operator thinks the visitor wants, not in fact what the visitor wants. There are examples here in the Territory of operators failing for precisely that reason - failing to adapt to a developing market - and I encourage all operators to survey their clients regularly with a view to improving and enhancing their businesses.

We have Yulara, now virtually an accomplished fact; the Alice Springs Golf Course development, including the new Sheraton with all the potential to make Alice a retirement centre like Palm Springs in the USA; and the Esplanade complex in Darwin well down the track, with a Sheraton hotel planned and hopefully to start this year. All this will take quite some marketing, but it is virtually impossible to sell the Territory in a big way overseas until the infrastructure is in place. The overseas airlines are difficult to interest but I am sure the very name 'Sheraton' appearing in Yulara, Alice Springs and Darwin has created enormous interest in the trade and is causing the Territory to be taken much more seriously.

Whilst on the subject of overseas airlines, and with great respect to Qantas and indeed acknowledging its generous support in promotional activities - I should not mention names but Ian Auchinachie, the Qantas Inbound Sales Manager, has been a tower of strength to us - I must say nevertheless that, in tourism
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terms, our national carrier seems better at taking Australians out of their
country than bringing overseas visitors in. Some questioning of the age-old wisdom that it is necessary to have a national flag carrier is long overdue. I think a study would establish that a national overseas airline could prove a drain rather than the reverse.

But accepting that my views are too extreme to be adopted and would be very difficult to implement, let me argue for a rationalisation of aviation in Australia in line with reality and practice overseas. Instead of looking at the USA, let us look at Canada - some would say a fairer comparison. Canada has 2 major airlines - Air Canada, the government airline, and CP Air, a private operator. Both airlines operate overseas and domestically within Canada. Some routes are shared and competitive, others are exclusive. Outside the country, both must compete in the market. CP Air comes to Australia; Air Canada does not. Both operate into the USA and, since deregulation, they seem to have built up something of a USA domestic network, competing in that hurly-burly environment.

The significant thing is that, if you want to fly to somewhere in Canada from overseas, and if your airport is serviced by one of these 2 airlines, you will be able to buy a throughfare to Regina, Saskatchewan, or Edmonton, Alberta, not one fare from Sydney to Vancouver and then another from Vancouver to Edmonton. Also, and perhaps more significantly, the same airlines can offer discount travel packages within Canada. Members are probably asking why we cannot do this in Australia. We cannot do it because our domestic and international civil aviation policies have been tailored to the situation and not to the real national requirements.

All members know what has happened in our skies since World War 2. TAA was established as a domestic operator in 1945. Qantas was taken over from private ownership by government in 1947. Ansett Airlines has evolved as the second major domestic airline from antecedents such as Guinea Airways and ANA. Our international CAP (ICAP) has developed as a struggle to maintain Qantas route entitlements and fare structures in the international marketplace. Our domestic CAP (DCAP) has evolved as a coercive exercise directed at the travelling public and potential competitors of TAA and Ansett and has become known as the 2-airline policy.

I even acknowledge that, at some stage in the 1950s or 1960s, it could even be seen as attractive but its rationale is the maintenance of a level of services to the whole of Australia. Even if the equipment the 2 domestics now operate did not militate against that desirable end, their own policies have discredited the 2-airline policy. They are pulling out of the feeder routes and turning them over to third level operators and attempting to hog the main trunk routes. They no longer maintain the pretence of serving remote areas. Check the list of ports serviced by their DC3s and Fokker Friendships in the 1950s and 1960s and you will see what I mean.

Here in the NT, we have the situation where the Ansett subsidiary, ANA, is required to operate profitably. And a very desirable end it is too but Ansett gets all the on-traffic income.

But I divert - we have what we have because of history. With the federal government owning TAA and Qantas, the situation can be changed to try to meet our real needs. The 2 government airlines should be amalgamated and Ansett offered an opportunity to operate overseas directly or in partnership with another airline. This would, I believe, lead to a better penetration of the overseas market through more competitive air fares which can be achieved by more rational use of expensive equipment. We would be able to wipe the ridiculous proviso that compartmentalises overseas and domestic operations at the moment.
We would be offering the traveller greater convenience in that there would be less need to change planes. I will be seeking to interest the federal government in seriously studying this proposal. Australia's future and thousands of jobs hang on the future of our tourism industry. At present with our airlines, we are just digging ourselves deeper in.

Our marketing strategy for the next few years is in the process of formulation by the commission and will be considered during budget discussions. While Queensland is a competitor in the domestic market, the Territory and Queensland are complementary overseas, and hopefully our natural rivalry can be overcome and more active joint promotions overseas will soon be a reality.

Katherine will continue to develop as a destination and expansion will continue there as the attractions of the region become more widely known and appreciated. The completion of the Stuart Highway in South Australia and the construction of the Jabiru-Pine Creek Road by 1986 will enhance the position of Katherine and also Tennant Creek. Tennant Creek is more of a worry to me. Katherine is very enthusiastic for tourism and the jobs it creates; Tennant Creek much less so. A real effort is necessary on the part of operators in Tennant Creek to improve the attractions of the region and their own standards. The energy and time spent bemoaning their plight should be applied more constructively. For one thing, the town's service clubs should be enlisted by the council in a coherent effort to get tourism off the ground in the district. Improving the airport will be pointless if there is nothing to attract the visitor. The planes will continue to fly over the top. It is important that the council put its weight and credibility behind the industry. The council must set the lead. Coercive ideas regarding visitors should be abandoned in favour of attracting them.

In Australia at the moment, if people think of a place to retire to, they think of Queensland. It is a habit that has developed for lack of any alternative. It is no good pretending either that it is a bad habit that is going to be easy to change or easy for the Territory to break in on. But, in a country and a western world with an ageing population, it is a market that must be considered. With, of course, a much larger population, the USA has many retirement centres in its more arid areas where the climate has some attractions. Palm Springs in California and Phoenix, Arizona, are only 2 such centres. Golf and other recreational activities such as bowls are what retired people are looking for. Pure fresh air, unpolluted by city smog, enhances their health.

I believe Alice Springs has the potential perhaps more than the Top End to attract the person considering a suitable place to retire to. The Alice now has good hospital and medical facilities. In the next few years, we will have to bend our efforts towards attracting older people to the Alice to settle. Careful planning will be necessary. Attitudes that have been conditioned for generations will have to be changed. It will not be easy but it can be done and will be done.

Still on Alice Springs, a week or 2 ago, I could not hire a rent-a-car. In the month of February, this is almost incredible. Storekeepers and business people assure me they have had busy months in January and February - not all the motels are full but the level of activity is building solidly into a year-round thing. My motel had many German and Japanese visitors. They liked our warm weather, contrasting it with the bitter cold of their home countries at this time of the year.

In the Top End, our green, or wet season, needs to be more fully exploited with flood-plains tours in airboats or hovercraft. Nothing could be more
exciting and attractive to the overseas visitor. But the big hole still exists in Kakadu - a serious lack of infrastructure. To give you an idea of how it would go with the right level of facilities, the South Alligator Motor Inn keeps expanding to meet increasing demand without active promotion in the south. The new Cooinda Motel apparently is booked out for the season and even next year even though it has only just opened.

It was interesting that, in early December, Minister Cohen gave me a copy of the federal Cabinet decision on infrastructure for Kakadu, which our proposed seminar at South Alligator was convened to discuss and provide feedback from all interested parties. When I discussed the seminar and its timing with Mr Cohen at that time, he gave it his full blessing. I extended an invitation for him to be present.

Strangely, his colleague, Mr Holding, said at Cooinda only a couple of weeks ago that the nature of the infrastructure in Kakadu would not be decided in backrooms in Canberra or Darwin, yet he was instrumental in torpedoing what was to have been a major effort at on-the-ground consultation with all the parties and actively supported by NLC and ANPSW. It is vital for the future of tourism in the Top End that this World-Heritage-listed park be catered for in a rational fashion without further unnecessary delay. It is the key to many, many jobs, not just in the region but also in Darwin where the viability of new hotels and our international airport are all at stake. We have lost hundreds of jobs in new uranium mines and we were promised they would be made up in tourism. When, I ask, is anything going to happen?

Behind major tourist developments there will be plenty of scope for coach operators, for air tours, for trail rides, for tennis and squash courts, for restaurants, laundries, fishermen, market gardeners and all the host of supportive industries. And the majority of visitors will not want, or be able, to afford to stay with the likes of Sheraton, so lower-budget motels and camping grounds will spring up to supply that sector of the market.

We must make a success of tourism because, frankly, there is no immediate alternative. Uranium is in limbo, and oil and gas will be good but are some years away from having a major impact. The railway hovers like a mirage and a free port is several years off at the least. Agriculture is fraught with difficulty. Horticulture holds much promise but will not be easy. Even the old reliable pastoral industry is under the BTEC cloud. So tourism it has to be, and Territorians must rally round. Friendly service must be the watch word.

The Territory Development Corporation will do all it can to promote other activities and endeavour to attract investment from outside the Territory. Our plans are ambitious but it is not a matter that can be open to question. We must succeed with these projects and give ourselves the successful track record that is so essential to ensuring future support of Territory growth by the domestic and international financial community.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, last December, the issue that impelled the Chief Minister to call an early election was the handing over of the title to Ayers Rock to its traditional Aboriginal owners. In the midst of this election fever and deliberately-fostered racial mistrust, the real issues were buried. A majority of voters in the Northern Territory were apparently taken in by the Chief Minister's energetic show of righteous indignation, and they subsequently gave him the majority he wanted. Voters in my electorate, however, were not fooled. They have consistently identified the Australian Labor Party as the political party which best represents their interests, and the results of last December's election confirm that this is still the case.
It seems to suit the CLP government and the media to propogate an image of Aboriginals as blindly opposed to economic development, eager to appropriate the land belonging to honest, industrious white Territorians and, of course, politically ignorant and open to manipulation. The government has opposed every land rights claim, regardless of its legitimacy or merit.

Through its Department of Education, it has hampered the education of Aboriginal children – particularly those in bilingual schools – by a stubborn policy of non-replacement of Aboriginal assistant teachers who go to Batchelor for training. It closed down, on one day's notice in 1980, the only Aboriginal secondary education facility in Arnhem Land. It refused to assist the innovative Yipirinya School, which is probably the most energetic and ambitious self-help project ever undertaken by Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

As I have said, Mr Speaker, Aboriginal people are not fooled by the Chief Minister's anti-Canberra rhetoric. Despite their profound communications problems, their isolation and their generally low level of formal education, the people of my electorate are well aware of the Territory government's lack of regard for them. They attach great importance to the principles of self-determination and self-management, and they are far from blind to the need for economic development. Witness the recent opening of the Cooinda tourist development by the Gagadju Association. Quite legitimately, of course, they wish to have a say in the nature of the pace of that development. They want to be consulted and they want to be represented.

In trying to provide that representation for the people of Arnhem, I will address myself to a number of issues which are of long-standing concern. These include: the poor state of public facilities in many communities; the staffing and funding problems of schools, health-centres and community councils; the abject failure of the legal system to accommodate itself to Aboriginal needs; the necessity for Aboriginal field officers and rangers to monitor and protect the environment; and the desperate need for meaningful employment opportunities in all communities.

Mr Speaker, I will not be ignoring the needs of my non-Aboriginal constituents. The many public servants, teachers, nurses, essential services personnel and others who work in the various communities – often under difficult conditions – rarely have the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues which are important to them. The residents of the mining town of Alyangula, on Groote Eylandt, live in what is probably the most remote town in Australia. I intend to make sure that their isolation does not prevent them from having their concerns expressed vigorously in this Assembly and elsewhere.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I should like to make it clear that I represent an electorate in which many people are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Northern Territory government in recent years. They are treated to a constant flow of rhetoric about the wondrous development of the Northern Territory but, for the most part, they do not seem to share in the benefits.

It is worth noting, Mr Speaker, that the majority of my constituents were born in the Northern Territory and will live all their lives here, as will their children and grandchildren. They are not here to make a quick dollar and then head south again. Their interest in the Territory's development is not temporary or cursory but permanent and vital. When they receive money from any source, it is spent on goods and services here in the Territory, not salted away down south or overseas.
It is my firm intention to help them to articulate their dissatisfaction, and to demand a say and a share in the development of the Northern Territory.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I have much pleasure in rising today to support the motion by the Chief Minister. His Honour's address outlined the government's proposals for the life of this Assembly. I would like to touch on some of the government's plans in the fields of health, youth, sport, recreation and ethnic affairs.

Mr Speaker, in 1979 when the Northern Territory government assumed responsibility for the delivery of health services to Territorians, the annual budget of the Department of Health was $55.3m. Five years later in 1983-84, it has almost doubled to $102.6m. This figure includes $7.58m of funding to a wide range of community-based organisations providing health-care services. During this period, the Department of Health has undergone extensive review. The result is a streamlined and rationalised health service, providing modern and efficient health care right across the Northern Territory.

During the life of this Assembly, Mr Speaker, the government is committed to a wide range of initiatives that will ensure the continuation of current programs and improvements in all facets of health-care delivery. As outlined by His Honour in his address, the government has approved the construction of a new 32-bed wing at Katherine Hospital, incorporating paediatric facilities, at a cost of $3m in 1984-85. Planning is under way for a $6.5m 70-bed children's hospital in Darwin. Construction will begin in 1985-86. New health centres will be opened at Berrimah, Palmerston and Ramingining, and proposals for a nursing home at Katherine are under consideration by the Commonwealth.

A 24-hour general practitioner service has been established at Royal Darwin Hospital. Standards of hospital care are constantly evaluated by the government, the hospital management boards, professional peer review groups and the Royal Darwin Hospital patient care committee. As honourable members may know, the 2 specialist hospitals in the Territory are nationally accredited, each for a second period of 3 years. They are also recognised as special teaching hospitals of the University of Sydney.

In the area of community health care, the government is constantly reviewing its services and facilities to ensure that community needs are met. The opening of the northern suburbs health centre and dental clinic at Casuarina Plaza last year was a significant step in rationalising health services in the northern suburbs of Darwin.

Mr Speaker, all pre-school and primary school pupils in the Northern Territory receive free dental screening and treatment. Honourable members will be aware of the introduction in 1984 of free treatment, in addition to present dental screening, for Northern Territory secondary school students. This is a first for Australia.

In the area of services for the aged, the government is committed to various initiatives, including further development of nursing home facilities in Darwin and Katherine, the establishment of senior citizens' centres in rural Darwin, Katherine and the northern suburbs of Darwin and the establishment of a home support group, providing a coordinating mechanism for existing services. From 1 March 1984, a subsidised taxi service will operate in Darwin for the benefit of handicapped people.

In the area of youth, sport, recreation and ethnic affairs, there have been significant advances and government programs that have benefited all Territorians. Territorians are renowned for their keen interest in a wide range of sporting activities.
During the life of this Assembly, we are committed to the establishment of an institute of sports medicine. The institute will be staffed by a range of professional officers including a general practitioner and a physiotherapist and will have access to other specialist resources. It will include a clinic for the treatment of sports injuries and will be housed on the ground floor of Sports House in Waratah Crescent, Fannie Bay. We are also committed to a $1-for-$1 subsidy for Territory directors of coaching. This subsidy will be provided up to the level of $12,500 per year and is designed to enable Northern Territory sporting associations to have full-time directors of coaching.

There will also be a $1-for-$1 subsidy for administrative officers of Northern Territory sporting associations. This subsidy is designed to improve the capability of Northern Territory sporting associations to cope with the ever-increasing load of administration.

A policy on sport and recreation for the disabled has been developed to ensure that this special group is not overlooked in the development of general community sport and recreation facilities. The basis of the policy is that integration in the mainstream of sport and recreation is desirable whenever possible.

We are also committed to the completion of stage 3 of the Marrara complex, including parking areas, by July and the development of the Australian Football and Cricket Association facilities at Marrara sporting complex. This latter development includes 3 ovals, 2 of which will be used as homes of football clubs and the NT Football League headquarters. The third oval will be the headquarters of the Northern Territory Cricket Association. It will have a first-class turf wicket. This development will be a long-term project and will be undertaken in stages. The end result will be that the headquarters of the Northern Territory Football League will be housed in a modern facility eventually capable of holding up to 25,000 spectators. Detailed costing has not been completed but it is expected to be in the order of $8.5m.

In Alice Springs, we are committed to the development of a new cycling velodrome at a cost of $284,000 this financial year to be completed about July. There is also the proposal to build a stadium in Alice Springs. $500,000 is allocated for this financial year as a tied grant-in-aid to the council and a 4:1 subsidy for the Alice Springs YMCA complex.

Further, there is the Northern Territory youth policy and the Northern Territory Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs. The youth policy has been developed following the adoption of the interim youth policy by Cabinet early last year and full consultation with the community over recent months. The policy is designed to focus attention on youth needs while, at the same time, retaining the flexibility to respond to changing needs.

A youth leisure centre will be established in the northern suburbs. It is expected that this centre will be privately managed and will offer a range of activities, including some electronic games, table tennis, eight-ball and quiet areas for reading, chess etc. The government is negotiating with various community groups which may be interested in the project.

The Northern Territory Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs will be established to facilitate consultation and cooperation between the government and those groups in the private sector which are involved with youth. One of its first tasks will be the organisation of programs leading up to International Youth Year. It has been a Territory government initiative to establish an IYY unit within the Youth, Sport and Recreation Division. The role of this unit will be to stimulate, coordinate and evaluate activities leading up to and
incorporating the themes of IYY. The Northern Territory Youth Advisory Council will also be concentrating during the course of this year on planning for IYY which is 1985.

The government established an Office of Ethnic Affairs. With the advice of this body, it actively promotes appreciation of the cultural diversity of Territorians, encourages cultural activities and provides special services, such as interpreter services, to meet the needs of ethnic groups.

In the area of drug and alcohol services, the Territory spends far more per capita than any other government in Australia. Currently, policies are being developed on tobacco products. Further broad policies on alcohol use are being developed, including policies on the appropriate balance of services between prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. An increasing proportion of drug and alcohol funds will be expended in preventative programs, rather than on treatment or rehabilitation. Alcohol education and other community-based activities will be emphasised.

The levels of skill of people working in this field will be upgraded through consultation and training programs. An Aboriginal alcohol worker training program will be instituted. Regional drug and alcohol groups will be strengthened and will play an increasingly important role in the delivery of community-based service, funded through grants-in-aid. Research and program evaluation will continue to receive high priority. Policy-oriented research will be emphasised as an essential component of policy development. The current imbalance in the distribution of drug and alcohol services - if they are concentrated in Darwin - will be progressively reduced. Preventative programs, treatment facilities, sobering-up shelters etc will be developed in response to regional needs. This is in addition to the significant achievements already made by the government in the drug and alcohol area.

In the area of Aboriginal health, there has been obvious improvement. Over the last few years, Aboriginal infant mortality rates have dropped and the incidence of new cases of leprosy has declined. Much of the credit for this success should be given to Aboriginal health workers. Mr Speaker, you would be aware of the highly successful Aboriginal health worker training program operated by the Department of Health. Thanks to this program, there are now about 300 Aboriginal health workers in the Territory. They operate from an extensive network of government and independent community health centres, with professional support from rural nursing sisters and district medical officers. In addition, the government provides an effective aerial medical service to isolated communities.

As an example of the contribution made by Aboriginal health workers, I would like to mention the Department of Health's trachoma control program. This program, which is coordinated by the Northern Territory Trachoma Control and Eye Health Committee, uses the skill and training of Aboriginal health workers in the diagnosis and treatment of trachoma sufferers. Two Territory Aborigines have also produced a booklet on the subject which is being used as a health guide throughout Australia and even overseas. Legislation to provide for the registration of allied health professionals, including Aboriginal health workers, is being prepared.

Other projects in the Department of Health's legislative program for this Assembly include amendment of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act to effect minor changes. A total review of the following professional registration acts will be conducted to achieve uniformity of registration board procedures: Pharmacy Act, Optometrists Act, Medical Practitioners Registration Act and the Radiographers Act. A complete review and updating of the Radiation Safety
Control Act will be carried out. Environmental aspects of noise legislation are to be reviewed in conjunction with the Office of the Co-ordinator General. New legislation relating to non-coronial post-mortems and to the disposal of bodies will be considered. Consideration is being given to the making of regulations relating to tattooists.

Mr Speaker, the whole process of providing health services in the Territory must be subject to a continuous program of review and evaluation. It is vital that the services we provide are appropriate, cost-effective, responsive to community needs and of a high standard. Territorians have experienced many new federal health schemes over the past few years. The newest scheme, Medicare, came into operation on 1 February 1984 and Territorians may be assured of access to any of the benefits it offers and that the best possible deal was negotiated when the Territory signed the Commonwealth Medicare Agreement on 31 January.

I have pleasure, Mr Speaker, in expressing my gratitude to the Administrator for his attendance within this Chamber and his address to honourable members. I support the motion.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to represent the seat of Stuart. Stuart nowadays lies north of Alice Springs, south and west of Tennant Creek and stretches from the Western Australian to the Queensland border. It comprises an area of approximately one-third of the Northern Territory. It is 1000 km from Alice Springs to one corner of the electorate, 1400 km across to another corner and a further 800 km back to Alice Springs. In the north, you are almost in the Top End; in the south, you are very much in the heart of the Centre. The main impression that anybody would get travelling around my electorate is that it is big.

Approximately three-quarters of my constituents are Aboriginal. Most of the rest are of European stock. They are scattered between some 120 communities, outstations, cattle stations and mining camps.

To say that it is a difficult electorate to service would not be an exaggeration. It will be necessary to spend days and weeks behind the wheel of a vehicle just to provide the most basic contact with the people. There are no television stations servicing Stuart. Radio reception is extremely patchy and no newspapers circulate freely through the area. Given all this, I am constantly amazed at just how well-informed my constituents are on the various issues that affect them and the rest of Australia. They are in fact so starved for information that they purchase news cassettes from their local store just so they can keep abreast of what has been going on in the rest of the country.

As other members who have represented rural areas will know, a large part of a rural member's time is spent acting as a go-between between the people and various government departments. The difficulty in doing this for Stuart is compounded by the fact that various parts of the area are serviced by departments based in different areas. For example, some departments service parts of the area from Tennant Creek, others service the same area from Alice Springs and yet others will service parts of the area from Katherine. When I have completed the bureaucratic shuffle between those 3 centres, I will no doubt be taking cases to the departments' headquarters in Darwin or Canberra. Still, if it is difficult for me, how much more difficult has it been for my constituents?

Mr Speaker, I believe my electorate, without fear of contradiction, could be described as the most poverty stricken in Australia. A recent international survey came up with the conclusion that Australia was the third most desirable country in the world in which to live. This was compiled on the basis of various
social statistics. My constituents would, along with the rest of us, rank Australia far higher than third. However, this country's statistics are significant compared with what actually exists in the electorate of Stuart. Australia, I am told, averages 489 telephones per 1000 people. This should give Stuart some 2400 phones. In the whole of Stuart we have in fact only 10 automatic telephones. According to statistics, we should have numerous doctors, dentists, social workers etc. We have one doctor, a valiant worker, living in the area, no dentists and the large majority of our other services are provided, where they are provided, by people who live in centres such as Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine.

In saying this, I must pay tribute to those people who are delivering services from within the area: the schoolteachers, community advisers, police, health workers etc who, in the main, are striving to do the best job they know how in an area where cross-cultural relationships are very important. Many of them were sent out to these areas young and inexperienced, without having had the opportunity of study in the type of problems they would experience. They have had to try and work out for themselves a method of operating which works for them. I find it very difficult to blame those who fail. I find it very easy to blame the system which would throw people into the deep end in this manner.

In spite of their valiant efforts, we must look at the facts as they exist in Stuart today. The people in the area suffer one of the highest morbidity rates in the country. The death and accident rates on our roads are amongst the very highest. Large numbers do not even have a safe water supply. Most do not have adequate housing. In fact, many do not even have security of tenure to the place where they lay their head. They can at any time have their homes destroyed and be moved around the country like a mob of cattle. These people are not even able to apply for water, shelter etc.

Our unemployment statistics go as high as 100% in some communities and would average around 60% to 70%. The pastoral industry employs as many as it can; the rest are in service industries. The majority of skilled workers are, however, still brought in by contractors from outside areas. To an extent, this is because of our low skills level but, in the main, it is because the contract system is such that contractors are unwilling to take the risk of relying on local labour and find that there is more certainty in bringing in the labour from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek or wherever.

There are large gaps in the coverage by primary schools. Communities of up to 200 people are left entirely without education. There are no high schools in the area and children have to be moved away from their parents to schools in town, Yirara or the like. Unfortunately, while the parents are happy for their children to receive a degree of formal education, they become very worried when their children come back unable to observe the basics of tribal ritual and good manners.

We have no hospitals which means that, with some 85% of births now occurring in hospitals, large numbers of mothers are repatriated from their own areas to Alice Springs, Tennant Creek or Katherine, there to give birth to their children. While this may have brought down the infant mortality rate somewhat, it creates enormous problems within the family as to who looks after the elder children and it prevents bonding ceremonies so the babies' future land ownership rights are often clouded.

To sum up the bad points, we have completely inadequate environmental health, our service delivery, in many areas, is grossly lacking and the control by the community over delivery of those services is in many cases non-existent.
What then is the good news? The good news for the people is that more than half now have land rights or are in the process of gaining control over some of their ancestral lands. This has given the people in those areas a new sense of purpose and a degree of self-assurance which is often sadly lacking amongst those people who are simply squatters in their own country.

We have many good leaders who are working to try and overcome problems and to explain to the government and anyone else who will listen the nature of the problems and how we can all work together to overcome them. We have community councils which strive mightily under the dead bureaucratic weight of departmental instructions to attempt to provide to their communities services in the manner that these people desire. I have mentioned those services personnel who have come to Stuart from another place to attempt to provide services in that area. I also pay tribute to those people who were born in the area and who are now undergoing training to take up positions such as health workers, police aides, teachers etc. In them lies the great hope for our future.

Mr Speaker, there are areas in my electorate where you would be forgiven for believing that the people are preoccupied with the problems of race relations to the exclusion of all else. While we do have our racists, our paternalists and rebels, we also have a large majority of people who acknowledge the fact that we are 2 groups with vastly different sets of values, who must somehow find a way to live together. This is an area which has seen some of the most horrendous racial clashes that Australia has experienced in the last 60 years. I have found, however, that the vast majority of people still acknowledge that their future is inextricably bound together and that solutions have to be found to the problems of different racial and socio-economic groups living together if a harmonious future relationship is to be established.

I believe that most people in Stuart acknowledge the historical fact that nowhere in the world have 2 vastly disparate socio-economic groups been able to coexist over a long period without friction and without a tendency for increasing force to be applied by the have-nots against the have-nots. You have only to look around the world today to see that, where you have a small group of have and a large group of have-nots, there are basically only 2 alternatives. The have can use increasing force to hold on to what they have or they can work together with the have-nots to lift their economic status to a degree where they no longer perceive a major economic difference between themselves and the rest of the community.

While there will always remain individual differences, differences of a social nature and a difference in aspirations between various cultural groups, this in itself need not give rise to racial tension. It has been my experience that racial tension exists primarily where there is also an economic gap and is built upon an atmosphere of fear, compounded by ignorance. If the economic gap can be lessened and ignorance removed, there is nothing then for one group to fear from the other and the 2 can coexist in harmony.

In some parts of my electorate, people are approaching a crossroad where they will need to decide the type of relationship and the type of future they wish for their children. The imbalance between the 2 groups is, of course, far too great to be addressed by the people of Stuart alone. It is not simply a matter of those who have handing over all they have to the have-nots and saying: 'Now we are equal, everything will be okay'. Those people which I have named as haves are haves only in comparison to those who have not. They themselves are battlers who are struggling to make a living, often achieving a standard which in itself is below that of the general Australian norm. In any other area, many of them would themselves be classified as have-nots and the government would be implementing social programs to assist them.
It will therefore be necessary, for some considerable time to come, for other parts of the Territory, and indeed other parts of Australia, to assist the people of Stuart to lift themselves up to a standard of living which more closely matches the Australian norm. There will no doubt be those who cry shock and horror at this statement. They will say: 'Why should we be subsidising the people of Stuart?' It would, of course, be the height of hypocrisy for any person in the Territory to say this about those less fortunate than himself. It is a simple matter of mathematical calculation to work out that the average person in the Territory is subsidised to the tune of about $6000 to $7000 per annum by the federal government. I am not decrying this - it is essential if we are to build up within the Territory a new state which can take its place with pride alongside the others throughout our nation. What I am saying is that those arguments which, when applied to the Territory as a whole, make it necessary and indeed just that we receive substantial subsidies, apply equally, if not more so, to the people of Stuart.

I am not even saying that gross per capita expenditure will in each year necessarily be equal between the urban and rural areas. There are highly expensive items to be constructed in the cities to provide facilities and infrastructure to rural areas forming a base from which further development can take place. I am, however, extremely impatient with those who have decided that the current level is a just one. There would be very few people living in the towns who would be prepared to exist with the low level of services provided on outstations and camps around Stuart. And yet many people decry the expenditure of funds providing services to small population groups in rural areas. These same people would probably be the first to scream bloody murder if those same people were to leave their home areas and camp around the major centres of population on anything like a long-term basis.

Mr Speaker, the members of the government opposite are constantly reminding us that the justification for increased funding in the Memorandum of Understanding is the principle that people in the Northern Territory should enjoy services of the same standard as those enjoyed by people in other states. Mr Speaker, through you, I am inviting the members of the government to take into account the level of services provided in Stuart when next they make their submission. I am certain that Blind Freddy will agree that the quality of services available to the people of Stuart is grossly and criminally deficient when compared with anything that exists in Victoria or New South Wales.

I have described the electorate of Stuart, its people, its problems and its financial needs. Its needs, however, are more than financial. Also required are policies by the government which will allow the people of Stuart themselves to develop their area to an appropriate level. I often hear members of the government saying that they believe in self-management and they support Aboriginal culture. Mr Speaker, I am afraid that, in the past, these have been empty words. They should visit communities and talk to the members of the councils and hear the high level of frustration which exists amongst those people who are trying their damndest to develop their own area. I sometimes feel extremely discouraged.

It would appear that we are building up large bureaucracies whose sole aim is to govern rural areas by remote control. They continuously tell the people: 'It is your own decision. You have to make it and you have to wear it'. However, whenever the decision that the people make does not fit in with some particular policy guideline, the people are criticised and threatened with the possibility of reduced funding or even legal action.

In some communities, we are losing some of our best leaders. They have not been able to live with the frustration of trying on the one hand to develop
services with the priorities and methods that their own people request of them, while at the same time attempting to comply with ridiculous guidelines imposed by this government. How can the government say that it recognises Aboriginal culture and supports self-management when it does no allow councils to provide services in a culturally relevant manner or to manage their own affairs within anything more than the most straitjacketed guidelines?

In the bush, we are constantly hearing words like 'development' and people are being told that they will be consulted about this development. I ask the question: who owns this development? If the people own it, then they must have control of it; they must be the ones to allocate the priorities, decide on the speed at which it will take place and the means of achieving it. If the government owns this development, it would be better off if it comes out and says so and tells the people: 'This is our development. We want to do this particular project for our own ends and you can either take it or leave it'. Let us cut out this hypocrisy whereby we continually tell people that their wishes are being taken into account when the decision has already been made at a far higher level. Stop the hypocrisy. The people of Stuart are not fools. They want genuine consultation and involvement in those areas of development which the government maintains are theirs and for them. Through the process of consultation and control of the type and nature of development in their area, they can express their cultural specifications for service delivery. If people identify with a particular service that they have decided upon and fought for, they will ensure its success. If something is foisted upon them by a distant government for its own ends, they will feel no identification with it and will simply vote with their feet when it comes up against a problem. The people of Stuart have a rather ironic chuckle whenever they hear the Chief Minister blame Canberra for lack of consultation.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the law and order situation in Stuart. No one is satisfied with the present overall situation. To say that there are problems is to put it mildly. My people face some of the highest imprisonment rates in the world. To what end, and at what cost, I sometimes ask myself. The financial cost is simple. It costs more for a prisoner to be looked after in the Alice Springs jail than at one of the better class motels in the town. The social cost is, however, far, far higher. Families are left to their own devices, often triggering further problems which will lead to the imprisonment of the same person, or others, later on.

I am a very strong believer in law and order. I believe that the weak must be protected and that good laws, administered in a culturally relevant way through the police and the courts, are as essential in this day and age as in any other. I believe, however, that prison as a deterrent is only effective when it is used to punish deviant behaviour. If the behaviour becomes so widespread that it becomes the norm, if prison becomes the norm, it no longer is a satisfactory deterrent. It must be the social stigma that attaches to jail which makes it a deterrent.

How then do we both enforce the law and ensure that the imprisonment rate remains acceptably low? In this, I applaud the efforts being made in some communities along the lines of watchmen, police aides and police who cooperate with these 2 levels and with the council to ensure that the community works out within itself as many of the minor problems that arise as is possible. I believe that this movement needs to be fostered and extended much further throughout the Northern Territory. I also look forward to the day when it will be possible for us to establish a system of community courts which will be able to give community work orders to members of their own community for a wide range of offences.

Mr Speaker, this speech would be incomplete if I did not address myself to
some of the practicalities of the economic situation in Stuart. We have a pastoral industry which, while currently still suffering the effects of the brucellosis and TB eradication program, is probably the best managed in the Northern Territory. It has, however, roughly reached its limits as an employment provider. We have the possibility of mining development but this by its very nature is uncertain. There may in the future be further development in the tourist industry but, for the time being, much of this will concentrate on people moving through the area fairly rapidly.

The major industry in the area is the delivery of services. It is this industry which also offers the greatest scope for further expansion. For many reasons, of which economics is only one, it is necessary that the delivery of services be concentrated more within the community and within the area rather than being provided on a remote control basis from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek etc. These industries have the capacity to generate employment and to increase the people's skills level to the extent where more people can earn themselves a satisfactory income. At the moment the major centres like Alice Springs and Tennant Creek act as a vortex in which all the income of the people of Stuart very quickly finds itself. It is essential for the development of Stuart that this money is turned over many more times within the area before it finds its way back to these centres.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, let me say that I am hopeful that I can work with the members of the current government, particularly those ministers who are very closely associated with the provision of services in my electorate. I hope that political considerations will not rule out a cooperative approach to finding and solving the problems in my electorate.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I would like to take the opportunity to outline some of the general directions proposed in the immediate future in the area of community development and to explain to honourable members some of my own opinions in this regard. But, firstly, I should place on record my grateful thanks for the chance to be able to do this. The electorate of Sanderson has placed its trust in me, both to represent its residents and to play an effective role in an effective Territory government. I intend to work hard so that this trust will not prove to be misplaced.

The opportunity presented to me is not unique but it is rare indeed that a member of any parliament finds himself in the position of making his maiden speech as a minister of government. Research has not been exhaustive, but 2 previous examples have been uncovered. One was Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. Another was the illustrious R.G. Menzies, who made his maiden speech in the federal parliament as Attorney-General. With all humility, I have to say that I shrink from such comparisons. They are mighty footsteps to follow.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am grateful indeed to be associated with the portfolio of community development. Much of my previous working experience has been in this area, and I hope I am able to bring to my new job many ideas and opinions formed as a result of that experience. The Chief Minister has said previously that community development would receive fresh impetus from this government. Accordingly, it has been allocated as a single portfolio to one minister.

I have taken the chair as the responsible minister with the Chief Minister's message very much in mind and I hope I am able to provide that impetus. In general terms, it is obvious that the Department of Community Development must be somewhat dynamic. Policies need to be changed constantly to meet the needs of the community and, in many cases, to anticipate those needs. This department
is all about people - all the people of the Northern Territory, whether in urban
or remote areas.

In the area of community government, the Territory government is keen to
push ahead with a number of initiatives and programs designed to give people a
greater involvement in their own affairs. As some honourable members would know,
3 Aboriginal communities have opted for conversion from incorporated council
status to community government - Lajamanu in 1980, Angurugu in 1982 and
Milikapiti last year. We see considerable advantages for Aboriginal communities
taking this course, as councils can expand their functions into typical local
government areas and become part of the Australian local government system.
Reconstitution into the Local Government Act can increase the opportunities for
genuine self-management by remote Aboriginal communities.

At least 3 more communities are presently hoping to have community
government established for their areas in the near future, but the government's
policy is to ensure full consultation and explanation before that can happen.
It must be absolutely clear that the new councils are in complete accord with
the wishes of the people.

It is important that members and staff of community councils be capable of
sound administration of responsibilities and, to this end, the government has
initiated a training program to improve the knowledge, skills and managerial
capacity of Aboriginal people to enable them to play an increasing role in the
management of their own affairs. The Department of Education is responsible for
the main implementation of this training program and it is due to go into
operation under the advisory umbrella of the Department of Community Development
about now.

As well, 2 finance officers have been touring Aboriginal communities to
assist with accounting and financial problems. Support for Aboriginal communities
is also being provided through the town management and public utilities program
which provides funds to Aboriginal councils to allow them to operate their
essential services and municipal functions. Funds totalling $20.7m have been
provided for this in the current financial year, and this has been topped up by
an additional $2.7m for recently-identified targets which will allow
acceleration of the provision of essential services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have touched only on some of the policies, programs
and initiatives concerning assistance to Aboriginal communities. There is a
continuing story which demonstrates this government's attitude in this matter,
and it is a story that is largely not told in the general community. Great
strides have been made in the provision of services and assistance to Aboriginal
communities in recent years and in the establishment of genuine self-management.
It is the firm policy of this government to continue that drive so that
Aboriginal people can increasingly manage their own affairs, and manage them
well.

As an outside observer of parliamentary affairs until recently, I have to
say that the Territory government does not seem to get the credit it deserves in
its genuine desire for these objectives and that the Commonwealth appears
sometimes to be over-credited for the role that it plays. In this and other
areas, the Territory is in fact leading the way while the rest of Australia
follows. Such is the case in community welfare, particularly in relation to
juveniles.

The new Community Welfare and Juvenile Justice Acts passed all stages of
debate in this place in October last year. This was the culmination of a
comprehensive review of Northern Territory welfare legislation, and the new acts reflect an innovative approach to legislation in this area.

I remind honourable members that the predominant feature is the total separation in law of those provisions designed to protect the welfare of children from those relating to the treatment of juveniles charged with offences against the law. The acts replace the outdated Social Welfare and Child Welfare Acts and, in many respects, the Territory is leading the world in this complex area. Such innovation brings inevitable criticism and possible teething problems, but I am confident the Territory will emerge with legislation which provides for humane treatment of difficult problems with real sensitivity.

In local government, this year emphasis will be placed on a more structured approach to communities through consultation and introduction of ways to manage their own affairs. The Rural Advisory Council was set up last year to investigate the feasibility of various options for local government in the outer Darwin area. The committee will make its final report on the subject shortly.

In the area of correctional services, the government is placing great emphasis on the need to expand sentencing options to take the strain off our institutions. In general, the ratio of offenders under the supervision of probation or parole authorities over prisoners being held in institutions is about 2 to 1. We would hope we can improve that ratio.

In arts and cultural affairs, the major interest this year will be the opening of the Araluen Cultural Complex in Alice Springs. This magnificent complex will bring to central Australia the very best in facilities for the arts, and it will play a key role in the government's tourism ambitions for the region.

The State Reference Library is undergoing considerable expansion as it moves towards amalgamation with the university library and its eventual establishment at Palmerston. A permanent archives building will also be located at Palmerston, and negotiations for this are at an advanced stage. A principal archivist started work in the Territory this month, and the consolidation of important archives will ensure vital records are preserved for posterity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on this occasion I have attempted only to brush across some of the areas in which development is occurring at a rapid rate and which may be of interest to honourable members. It is my intention to keep the Assembly and public fully informed of events and happenings in the community development portfolio and, in this regard, I will welcome inquiries from all honourable members. I regard the challenge before me as exciting and stimulating. In a rapidly growing and developing area such as the Northern Territory, there is always a danger that social development may be left behind. I will make it my role to ensure that this does not happen and I will be devoting my time and energies towards this end.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I also wish to speak to the Address in Reply this afternoon. Before I raise a number of issues pertaining to central Australia, I offer the honourable member for Stuart the advice that, if he wishes to get cash flowing into the economy of that electorate, he use his good offices and any pressure possible to get his constituents to let projects such as the Granites goldfields and others go ahead. If projects such as that were not delayed for many years, it would result both in employment and cash flows into those communities ...
Mr VALE: In the honourable member for MacDonnell's electorate, Palm Valley and Mereenie ...

Mr Bell: They are happening, aren't they?

Mr VALE: ... have been dragging on for years.

Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I wish to raise a number of issues which are, I believe, important to the many residents of central Australia. The first issue is that of roads. While central Australia has in recent years experienced a massive road building program, both in Alice Springs and in the bush area, much work is still to be done. In the bush area, I am hopeful that funds will continue to be made available for sealing work on both the Plenty and Tanami Highways. Work must also continue on construction of the Bundey Highway east of Mud Tank on the Plenty Highway.

Mr Speaker, I have previously spoken in this Assembly of the need to develop a ring road system from Ayers Rock across Lake Amadeus through Kings Canyon on to Kings Creek, then to the meteorite craters and into Alice Springs via the Stuart Highway. I believe that the salt Lake Amadeus will in itself become a major tourist attraction and provide another tourist spot in the Ayers Rock region. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to note that, acting on your advice, departmental officers from Transport and Works have now done some survey work on a possible road between Ayers Rock and Kings Canyon via Lake Amadeus. Without wishing to pre-empt any naming of such a road, I am hopeful that the name of Giles will be considered carefully in that context.

In respect to the roads within the town area of Alice Springs, one area of concern to the residents is the bitumen bleeding which occurs during the hotter days in the summer months. Damage to vehicle duco is at least one of the reasons for concern. I believe steps should be taken to determine the reason for the bleeding and what action, if any, can be taken to overcome it.

The largest single road construction contract ever undertaken in Alice Springs is presently under way with the reconstruction and realignment of the Stuart Highway from north of Smith Street through to Telegraph Terrace near the jail. The completion of this road work will see Alice Springs' first traffic lights and hopefully will result in a much smoother flow of traffic through the town area.

I must congratulate officers of the Department of Transport and Works and others who participated in the recent demonstration at Blatherskite Park. This demonstration showed how road trains would be able to turn and manoeuvre once this section of the Stuart Highway is reconstructed. One area that will require attention is where interstate haulers continue to park alongside this road edge creating, in some cases, severe traffic hazards.

Mr Speaker, the recently-completed east side connector road will also be of great benefit to motorists in Alice Springs but I believe that the Stott Terrace and Todd Street intersection will be the next place requiring traffic lights in Alice Springs. As a result of the connector road construction, the volume of traffic crossing this road will increase dramatically.

I believe the most important road for Territorians, particularly in central Australia, is the South Australian section of the Stuart Highway. By May of this year, another 200 km of this will be sealed and opened to traffic. By the end of next year, only 214 km of this highway will then remain unsealed between Darwin and Adelaide, and this work will be completed by December 1986.
Mr Bell: By a Labor government.

Mr VALE: But started by the Tonkin Liberal government.

Mr Speaker, Territorians will be delighted when this last national highway, funded under the bicentennial program and linking 2 states, is completed. The importance of this road, particularly to the tourist industry, cannot be overestimated. Its completion will provide a tremendous boost to tourism. As well, many residents of the Northern Territory will finally be able to motor out of the Territory on holidays without the possibility of wrecking their cars in the process.

Mr Speaker, climatically, Alice Springs is the sporting headquarters of the Territory, if not Australia. The vast amount of money spent in central Australia in recent years on the upgrading of sporting facilities means that Alice Springs can now organise and host many national competitions for various sporting events from baseball, swimming, soccer, Australian Rules football, to car and motorcycle racing, gliding and, with the completion later this year of a $280,000 velodrome in Alice Springs, cycling. Despite the amount of money that the government funds into these facilities, the weather and the enthusiasm of the sportsmen and women, it is the dedication of those many organisers with the various clubs and associations who devote so much time and effort day by day and week by week in organising and supervising the many sporting events in Alice Springs that is of paramount importance. It is these men and women who are responsible for the extremely high level of sporting achievements in central Australia.

Despite the fact that the government spends a lion's share of its annual budget on housing, both through direct building and through funding Australia's most attractive home loans scheme, housing is still creating some problems in Alice Springs, particularly in the rental area. I believe that we should look at some scheme or method of advising interstate people who are searching for work that they should first locate accommodation before coming to the Territory. That point aside, the Territory still has the shortest waiting time in Australia for housing accommodation and also the highest home ownership rate.

Mr Speaker, another area of concern for Alice Springs people is the lack of a resident eye specialist at the hospital. The need to locate, hire and hold such a specialist, I believe, should be a top priority of the Department of Health. In addition, the present eye clinic in Alice Springs will require some extensive upgrading.

The Alice Springs airport, one of the federal government's many false election promises, continues to have major problems with overcrowding. Interstate and international visitors really must wonder what they have let themselves in for when they arrive in central Australia. The upgrading of this facility is clearly a national responsibility and every possible pressure must be maintained on the federal government to honour its previous undertakings.

The Conservation Commission in Alice Springs only recently finished planting 1000 trees along the rail lines through the township of Alice Springs. Together with 600 trees planted around the government and commission flats and the nursing accommodation in Bloomfield Street, these trees are part of the Railtown Beautification Program. The commission is being assisted by Australian National Railways and various government departments. Whilst this railway beautification and tree planting scheme has been under way in Alice Springs for at least 12 months, I now note that tree planting, like just about everything else, has undergone a name change and is called 'Greening Australia'.
Nonetheless, this tree planting and other beautification work, particularly in the Gap area, will dramatically enhance the entrance to Alice Springs when these trees have gained a little height.

Mr Speaker, there is some worry in certain areas of Alice Springs concerning the Todd River flooding. Several years ago I suggested to the Chief Minister that consideration should be given to allowing gravel companies to remove several feet of sand from the bed of the Todd River under Conservation Commission supervision. The commission opposed the proposal. However, I believe that that idea and others should be examined pending a final decision on the proposed Todd River dam.

During the last Address in Reply speech I made in this Assembly in August 1980, I said that I hoped that, by the next election, both Palm Valley natural gas and Mereenie crude oil would be on stream. Whilst the Palm Valley gas is on stream, Mereenie crude oil is not. But I am ever the optimist: this valuable oil field should also be pumping within a few months and earning additional revenue for the Northern Territory government.

In recent weeks, residents of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine were able to view 2 of the 3 one-day Benson and Hedges cricket series finals. Whilst the battle with the ABC was long and drawn out and commenced last September or October, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ABC for televising this cricket. I also thank Mr Lynton Taylor, Channel 9 and PBL Marketing for making this series available to the ABC at no charge for televising into areas not serviced by commercial TV. I might say that this is not the first time that Mr Taylor and his organisation have gone out of their way to provide, at no charge, television coverage of national sporting events. This generosity is really appreciated by residents in outback Australia.

Whilst on the subject of flooding, there was some concern in central Australia several weeks ago when what was proudly regarded as our 'all weather' rail line was washed out near Marla Bore in South Australia. Given the volume and the velocity of the flood in the Marla Bore area, the question should be asked: just what is 'all weather'? I would like to pay tribute to those many rail workers and others who worked around the clock to repair the flood damage. I have been advised that the railways are now investigating the possibility of constructing more drainage in this area to prevent a recurrence of this problem.

Mr Speaker, my final point is that I believe a prison farm is still needed in Alice Springs. In fact, for want of a better name, I believe a 'junior prison farm' is also needed for young offenders so that they can be bushed, exercised and educated well out of the town area. The adult farm is, I believe, a necessary extension of other action taken in relation to the 2 km law.

Mr Speaker, I support the Address in Reply to His Honour's speech.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Housing): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak in this debate this afternoon, I see many new faces around me representing many new electorates. I see some older faces from previous electorates, whose boundaries have been changed to new electorates. The number of government members in the Assembly today compared with the number of members representing the opposition shows how this government's policies and initiatives fit in with what about 65% of the Northern Territory population really wants.

I would like to thank all the people in the Koolpinyah electorate who showed support for me in the recent election, and also support for my party.

It is with some regret, but not total regret, that I see that I am the only
woman in the Legislative Assembly today. I do not consider being a woman in politics important or unimportant. I consider being a woman in politics just a personal characteristic. I would like to think that I was elected because I was considered by about 64% of the electorate to be the most fitting person to represent them and not because I am a woman. My electorate is comprised of about 50% men and 50% women. I would like to think that I am considered as just a person.

Mr Speaker, in considering the state of policies and objectives read by His Honour the Administrator in his address to the Assembly this morning, I would like to say at the outset that most but not all of these proposed initiatives bring to the fore the importance of the Housing Commission and the Conservation Commission. Both of these commissions are viable, energetic, innovative, hard working and responsive to their charters in relation to Territorians and the Northern Territory.

Before I go on, I would like to take issue with what one honourable member said and with what one honourable member interjected in relation to the housing policy in the Northern Territory. The honourable member for Braitling commented adversely that it was necessary to wait for accommodation provided by the Housing Commission in the Northern Territory. I would like to say now that the average waiting time for accommodation in the Northern Territory is from 12 to 18 months. Nowhere else in Australia can this be bettered. In many cases, the waiting time for accommodation is a lot less than this. The waiting time in Alice Springs for accommodation is comparable with the waiting time in Darwin.

The honourable member for Stuart, in commenting on the long waiting time for accommodation in the Northern Territory, said that he would like to see the waiting time shortened. We would all like to see it shortened, Mr Speaker. With the continuing efforts of the Housing Commission, I expect that the waiting time for accommodation throughout the Territory will be reduced in the near future. One of the reasons for the current waiting time for accommodation in the Territory is that it takes so long to obtain accommodation in the states. People get tired of waiting for accommodation in the states and come to the Territory because they know they will get a pretty good deal here.

The honourable member for Stuart said that the Northern Territory government's policies are not responsive to the needs of Territorians. I would like to take issue with him on one point. He said that mining, by its very nature, is uncertain. It is uncertain while we have a federal Labor government in power.

Before I continue my remarks, I would like to declare an interest. My husband works for Pancontinental Mining Company in the Northern Territory. Pancontinental Mining Company, by its nature, was not an uncertain operation. Pancontinental Mining Company spent something like $50m in development of a known ore body in the Northern Territory. That ore body contains something like 5000 million tonnes of uranium ore and about 116 000 t of gold ore. It came within weeks of starting its project. Tenders had been called to build a bridge over Magela Creek. The federal Labor Party gained government last March and that was the end of the project. Instead of Pancontinental and Koongarra being allowed to mine uranium, a mine in South Australia, Roxby Downs, was given the go ahead. I do not know why uranium mining is okay in South Australia and, for some reason, the uranium that comes out of the ground in the Northern Territory cannot be considered. Roxby Downs will take about 10 years to prove up and to bring into operation. Mining by its very nature is only uncertain when there is a federal Labor government.
In relation to my portfolios, I am very proud to be representing the Conservation Commission and the Housing Commission. I know many officers in these commissions from my years in the Northern Territory and I have come to know of the work they do, how they do it and how it is received by Territorians. Both commissions have an innovative, energetic and hard-working approach to what they are doing for the development of the Northern Territory.

The Housing Commission in particular is responding to the rapid Territory population growth by providing a level of housing which is far and away above any level of housing provided in any state in the Commonwealth. It supplies home loans to home purchasers in the Northern Territory which encourages people on low incomes particularly to take out loans at favourable rates of interest and to put their roots down in the Territory and live here.

In the 1983-84 budget, the housing commitment was about $153m which is an increase on last year. Again, nowhere else in Australia has there been such an increase in the Housing Commission commitment to build houses for people. The Housing Commission has about 40% of the building commencements in the Territory. This is in the private housing field. In the states, only about 6% to 12% of private housing commencements belong to the equivalent bodies of our Housing Commission. This points to the favourable way our Housing Commission operates in the Northern Territory.

In the 1983-84 financial year, $9.6m was spent on Aboriginal housing. Of this, $5.3m was spent on Aboriginal communities. I think the honourable member for Stuart said there was a lack of consultation. I would like to direct his attention to the places where this $5.3m has been spent in Aboriginal communities to provide the type of housing that the Aboriginal people in those communities want. I can speak mainly from my experience with the Tiwi people on Bathurst and Melville Islands. There was consultation with those people on the sort of housing they wanted. The houses were built by their housing associations and they were built by the people who live on the islands and who would occupy those houses. If that is not consultation, I do not know what is.

The Northern Territory Home Loans Scheme is second to none. The Northern Territory Home Loans Scheme, administered by the Housing Commission, contributes 70% of home finance. Compare that with the 5% average that the state Housing Commissions contribute to home loans schemes. We are 65% ahead of the rest of Australia in providing finance for people to buy a home, to put down roots and have some security of tenure in the Northern Territory.

Since October 1979, 3500 home loans have been approved and the popularity of this government's approach to encouraging people to live in the Northern Territory is shown by the fact that the Housing Commission is now expecting something like 1000 approvals per year for home loans. During the course of the successful election on 3 December, this government promised to extend the qualification for home ownership in the Northern Territory. From 1 January the residential qualification to encourage home ownership and acceptance of a loan was reduced from 12 to 6 months. Loan ceilings have been increased and another new initiative, loans for first and second mortgages, has been introduced at the same rate.

Another initiative of the Housing Commission is the portability of loans over 3 years old which means that, if a person is living in a Housing Commission house, and after 3 years wishes to move to another house because of an increase in the family or for any other reason, that loan can be carried over to a new house after the relevant formalities have been completed with the Housing Commission. Nowhere else in Australia can a person do this. Another initiative of the Housing Commission is the Home Maintenance Rebate Scheme offering a
maximum amount of $1500 over a maximum period of 3 years. If, within a 3-year period, a person specifies that he or she is considering the purchase of the house, an agreement is entered into with the Housing Commission regarding maintenance of the house to be undertaken by the person living in it. The $1500 is taken off either the deposit for the house and subsequent purchase or deducted from loan repayments.

The Housing Commission is second to none in encouraging private sector building and in the variety and innovative approach to the design of houses. It is second to none in providing encouragement to small builders through the 'safety net' scheme. In cases where small builders and small building companies build houses, an agreement is made with the Housing Commission. If the houses have not been sold to private owners after 90 days, the Housing Commission will buy them from these private builders at a price agreed earlier.

Another innovation is the purchase of house-land packages. A further innovation is expressed by the Housing Commission through design-and-construct contracts which are let to builders in all centres in the Territory. The Housing Commission has as its main object not only the housing of people in the Territory, which encourages them to live here, put their roots down and raise their children in the Territory, but it also seeks to encourage the building industry. Also it is actively seeking to encourage private bank financing of home loans and other enterprises. In view of the operation of our Northern Territory Housing Commission, the work it has done and the options and encouragement it has offered to people in the Northern Territory compared to other housing authorities in the rest of Australia, I think our Housing Commission deserves a very firm pat on the back.

With regard to the operation of the Conservation Commission, I would like to say that, by and large, the tourist industry would not operate as successfully as it does if the people in the Conservation Commission did not have the interests of the Tourist Commission and the interests of the Territory at heart. I am not speaking only of the people at the top but for the rangers at the bottom of the scale. Without these people manning and administering our nature parks, reserves and sanctuaries throughout the Territory, the tourists would not be made as welcome as they are, they would not see as much as they do and they would not come back as often as they do. It is due in large part to the way the Conservation Commission officers do their job for the people of the Northern Territory with the interests of the Territory at heart.

Since taking up the portfolio of housing and conservation, I have travelled a little bit, Mr Speaker. I have seen work that has been done by the Conservation Commission, especially in Alice Springs. I was most impressed by the dust control project near the airport at Alice Springs. It was started a couple of years ago by the Conservation Commission. It has been very successful and really something to show off. Some members will have noticed the whirly design which was used for the cover of the telephone directory a couple of years ago because of this unusual approach to conservation. I can arrange for members to visit this project at Alice Springs. Probably the honourable members who come from that area have already visited it. The dust control project was initiated to do several things. One was to bring back ground cover to the area after the disastrous droughts of the previous years and to reduce the dust over the township of Alice Springs which was very bad from the point of view of primary industry, health and general economic conditions. It was intended to provide feed for stock grazing on these projects and to take advantage of the minimal rainfall in Alice Springs. All of these things were considered in this dust control project and, I must say, with great success.
I have also seen the soil erosion control measures adopted by the Conservation Commission, in the Alice Springs area particularly, which are directed mainly at pastoral properties. These initiatives are instituted sometimes by the Conservation Commission officers themselves and sometimes by the pastoral lessees. It shows the desire that Conservation Commission officers have to restore the country to the pretty good state it was in before the disastrous droughts of some years ago. They are receiving the encouragement of the pastoralists in doing this.

Several applications have been made to convert some pastoral leases to perpetual leases. A close examination is made of properties not only to assess what flora and fauna may be on the property but also to assess public recreation areas. This ties in quite happily with the BTB eradication campaign in that the pastoralists are seeking to bring their herds under closer control. They aim to put the herds on the most productive ground. This means that they have no further use for some of their non-productive ground. Often, these non-productive areas are hills, ravines and gorges which are the very things that the public and the tourists want to see. The Conservation Commission is working in very close harmony with the tourist industry in looking at all these areas and bringing them to the notice of the tourist industry.

In the states, the area of land covered by national parks or state parks ranges from 4% to as high as 40%. In the Territory, the proportion of national parks land is about 0.9% of its total area. This indicates a gross deficiency on our part which the Conservation Commission is working hard to overcome. The Conservation Commission officers are continually assessing areas to be included in our park estates. They are looking at areas in all parts of the Territory. When these projects come to fruition, they will be presented to this Assembly for its consideration.

The Conservation Commission is working with the Department of Primary Production in introducing and continuing quarantine measures, especially park quarantine measures. The first one that comes to mind is the dieback outbreak at Gove, the causative agent being phytopthora cinnamoni. This was discovered relatively recently. The Conservation Commission has received great help from the governments of Queensland and Western Australia. They sent forestry officers to attempt to contain the infestation and to consider methods of hygiene and the whole situation generally for the betterment not only of the citizens of Nhulunbuy but the whole Territory. The prospect of quarantine will be a major consideration in the years ahead because no more can we consider ourselves as isolated up here.

I do not think I will have time to say much more. I will just mention briefly that the Conservation Commission is very active in a crocodile protection policy and is actively encouraging 3 crocodile farms in the Top End. I think there may be one other crocodile farm in Australia. I stand to be corrected on that. Again, the Northern Territory is way ahead of the states with its crocodile protection policy and its general consideration of crocodiles in the wild and how they can be harvested. This is to the betterment of the people engaged in farming ventures. It also considers the safety of Northern Territorians and tourists who visit areas where crocodiles are prevalent.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, in any development policies that the Territory government puts forward, the Housing Commission and the Conservation Commission will continue to make their valuable input with the interests of all Territorians at heart.
Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, many years ago in Alice Springs, I lived next door to a very distinguished citizen who was known by all and sundry, from Alice Springs to Darwin, simply as Judge Nichols. He was not a true judge but a Justice of the Peace. He held many offices and from time to time he received letters from people interstate addressed just to 'Mr Everything - Alice Springs'. He ran the post office on the east side of Alice Springs, which the honourable Chief Minister would recall because, in those days, everyone on the east side received their mail addressed simply PO Box 38, east side. The old house is still there but the post office has been shut down. Two of the offices that Judge Nichols held in those days were as secretary of both the Alice Springs Football League and the Darwin Football League.

Last night I had the pleasure of attending the Nichols Medal Count in Darwin and meeting the late Judge Nichols' son. I would like to take this opportunity tonight to congratulate last night's Nichols Medal winner, Ninny Briston from Buffaloes. He won with 18 votes defeating his fellow team-mate John Patterson. Both players are brilliant. They have had good grounding playing for the Pioneer Football Club in central Australia. Other Buffalo players have had a similar background.

As well as congratulating Ninny Briston, I would just briefly like to pay tribute to the runner-up. In a few years time, his name will not be recorded as runner-up. The record will simply be: 'Ninny Briston - 18 votes'. Johnny Patterson took an early lead but sat on 17 votes. Ninny Briston came from behind in the last few counts and won the medal. I would pay tribute to John Patterson for his sportsmanlike approach in immediately getting out of his seat and going across and congratulating the winner. Johnny Patterson, as I said, played in Alice Springs for a couple of seasons for the Pioneer Football Club and he was known down there as the demon of the league but up here as the gentle giant.

If I could offer any tip for the premiership flag up here, I would suggest the Buffaloes. Last year in Alice Springs, a Pioneer footballer won the medal and the runner-up was also a Pioneer player. We went on to win the premiership. If omens follow suit in this part of the world, then Buffaloes must be odds-on for the premiership.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Northern Territory Football League and all the competitors for organising the medal count. I would also like to wish all competitors in the grand final series up here all the best.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, when I was at school, one of the favourite pieces of poetry which we had was called 'The Priest and the Mulberry Tree'. It ends up with this particular comment: 'All that well may be thought cannot wisely be said'. Often, the real thoughts of people are made known by their inadvertent comments. I would remind you, Sir, and those members who were in the last Assembly of one particular occasion when I asked a question of the honourable Minister for Education concerning a 100% rejection of teacher strike action which was being urged upon them by certain unions. The inadvertent comment of a member of the opposition, which was no doubt later regretted, was that they were scabs. Today, the honourable member for Koolpinyah happened to mention that 65% of Territorians voted for the government and considered it a good thing to do so. The inadvertent comment from the opposition was: 'only the
I deplore such comments. They add nothing to the dignity of this Assembly.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.